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SPEECHES

OF

EDWARD LORD LYTTON

NOW FIRST COLLECTED

WITH

SOME OF HIS POLITICAL WRITINGS

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED

27084

AND

A PREFATORY MEMOIR BY HIS SON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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PREFATORY MEMOIR.

THE papers bequeathed to me by my father, as materials for a record of all that possesses public or permanent interest in the literary and political activities of his life, I have accepted as a trust; and its faithful discharge, to the best of my ability, I regard as a sacred obligation.

The adequate biography of a life so full and various must, however, be the task of years. In the meanwhile, these volumes are offered to the public in compliance with a wish which I believe to be general, that my father's Parliamentary speeches and public addresses should be reprinted in some form more convenient than the pages of Hansard, and the columns of county newspapers.

The accuracy and great utility of Mr Hansard's excellent Parliamentary reports are too widely appreciated to need any tribute from me. But they who may henceforth desire to refer to my father's speeches will find them more conveniently arranged in the present reprint.

It does not, indeed, contain the whole of his speeches; but it contains all which relate to the more important events in the political history of the last forty years. This reprint of them is justified, I trust, by the pre-

diction of the Lord Chief Justice — that "they will remain as models of the highest and noblest eloquence, and of deep thought, such as should characterise the statesman."

They are here arranged in chronological order, with only such prefatory explanation as may refresh the reader's recollection of the circumstances in which they were spoken. My father's aims and opinions as a public man are best explained by the language in which he himself has recorded them. But to make the record more complete, I have added to the speeches actually spoken some few which were prepared for delivery, upon subjects of recent or durable interest—such as the Irish Church, colonial policy, &c.

In strict adherence to the same principle, I propose to illustrate this short sketch of what was purely political in his many-sided life by occasional extracts and selections from his posthumous political papers. Finally, it is here to be observed that, in that portion of his career which comes within the scope of the present notice, politics were so interfused with literature, that no specimens of his power as a speaker would be sufficient if they failed to include some of his extra-Parliamentary addresses upon literary or social subjects. The number of these is considerable; and I have only selected from them three or four, as illustrations of success in that kind of oratory for which our own age has created occasions not furnished to the orators of any previous age by the Senate, the Bar, or the Pulpit. These literary and social addresses are also reprinted in chronological order.

Mr Edward Bulwer entered public life as Member for the small constituency of St Ives in the year 1831. He had previously obtained some local reputation as a con-

scientious, rather than as an eloquent speaker, in the University Debating Society at Cambridge. The wholesome organic connection between university life and public life to which the English nation has been indebted for the rare vigour and youthfulness, not unrestrained by practical good sense, and for the high spirit, free from all sentimentality, which once characterised its international and imperial policy, was dissolved by the great Reform Bill of 1832, and has never since been restored or replaced. Whilst it lasted, it supplied the Legislature with an adequate number of young men of ability and ambition, who, without large independent fortunes, were enabled by it to enter Parliament with sufficiently independent opinions. The possibility of attaining to political eminence and influence at a comparatively early age, without heavy pecuniary expense, or a complete surrender of intellectual individuality, practically associated academic studies and honours with larger and manlier objects of immediate ambition. At the same time this ambition, while it gave to the university career a more practical character, was itself elevated and refined by the training of those studies in which it served to counteract the pedantic tendencies of all purely scholastic education.

Thus, these young men began public life at the age, and with all the intellectual conditions, most favourable to an early acquisition of the qualities which distinguish senators from delegates, and statesmen from mere politicians.

This salutary combination of circumstances had made of our universities the nurseries, and of our Parliament the training school, of imperial legislators. But it perished, undetected and perhaps unavoidably, in conse-

quence of its implication with what was clearly condemnable in a representative system of which it was the one felicitous accident. The Reform Bill of 1832 was inevitable, and on the whole it has been largely beneficial. The wisest statesman cannot anticipate all the teachings of time. Nor can we blame the authors of that great measure because they overlooked what no one then perceived—the national importance of providing the reformed representation with some equivalent for those means whereby the old representative system, indirectly but adequately, associated the young intelligence of the country with the practical conduct of its public affairs. Yet no State can practically exclude from the constitutional representation and management of its political interests all the intellect and energy of its educated youth, without deteriorating the character of that intellect and that energy; on which, nevertheless, its political vitality depends. Divorced from the practical objects, responsibilities, and restraints of active political life, intellectual culture grows supercilious, earnestness degenerates into priggishness, and enthusiasm exhales in crotchets. To the majority of educated young men without long purses, the doors of Parliament are now virtually closed. The *élite* of our undergraduates, whose natural ambition would formerly have been a seat in the House of Commons, now look for political influence only to the exercise of their talents on the public press; and thus become the anonymous and irresponsible critics of a Legislature into which they cannot afford to pay the entrance-fee. Thus, too, for the majority of Englishmen, public life begins at middle age, and is chiefly confined to the representation of local interests. The character of the imperial Legislature has consequently grown, and

must continue to grow, more and more parochial. Every separate interest, locality, and class, even every individual crotchet, is represented; but England herself, the national consciousness of imperial unity, is unrepresented in the national Parliament.

Men of all parties contemplate with anxiety the gradual disappearance of those statesmen who were trained to public life in a school that no longer exists. It is obvious that the only young men who have now at their command the means of contributing to the practical statesmanship of the future, qualities requisite for the administration of a vast, an ancient, and a highly complicated empire, are those who are exceptionally exempted, by the possession of great names or great fortunes, from all that impedes the early entrance of their contemporaries into public life. Hence, in that increasing body of young political intelligence which finds no direct utterance within the four walls of Parliament, there is a permanent and perilous element of intellectual discontent. Hence, too, in its international aspects, the character of the nation itself is timid, uncertain, and lethargic. For the old consciousness of imperial unity is at present so dispersed into local or class interests (not always in harmony with each other), that no English Cabinet could now venture, in its dealings with foreign powers, to discount the national sentiment with reference to future events, and say distinctly to Europe, 'England will never allow that,' or 'England will always maintain this.' Thus, for all practical international purposes, it little matters what man or party may from time to time have the nominal direction of our foreign policy; since, by the nature of things, that policy must necessarily be the Malaprop policy of not

anticipating misfortunes till they are past. The democratic force of the national life was weakened quite as much as its aristocratic mechanism, by a change which placed the preponderating political power in the middle class. But with a diminishment of that force, and a paralysis of aristocratic tradition, there has grown up amongst us a power which in every other country has hitherto proved revolutionary—the power of irresponsible intellect. Between the opinions of the English press and those of the French Encyclopedists there is nothing in common. But between the political power of the English press and that of the French Encyclopedists there is absolute identity of conditions. It is a power legitimately and inevitably acquired by superior intellect; but it is greater than has ever been accorded to any constitutional Government, and it can only be controlled by the public opinion it creates—a control wholly illusory in the conduct of public affairs.

Such reflections are irresistibly suggested by any retrospect of the modifications through which our political system has passed since the date at which this Memoir commences. The debates of the Cambridge Union at that time attracted more than local interest. They were conducted by a very brilliant group of young men, all destined to future eminence. They were discussed in the political clubs and *salons* of the metropolis, and often listened to with interest by men who were themselves already eminent in public life. It was in these debates that the genius of Macaulay first found expression, and indeed achieved (if we may trust the recollection of his contemporaries) some of its finest oratorical effects. "The greatest display of eloquence I ever witnessed at that club," wrote my father many

years afterwards, "was made by a man some years our senior, and who, twice during my residence, came to grace our debates—the now renowned Macaulay. The first of these speeches was on the French Revolution; and it still lingers in my recollection as the most heart-stirring effort of that true oratory which seizes hold of the passions, transports you from yourself, and identifies you with the very life of the orator, that it has ever been my lot to hear—saving perhaps one speech delivered by O'Connell to an immense crowd in the open air. Macaulay, in point of power, passion, and effect, never equalled that speech in his best days in the House of Commons." * Amongst my father's contemporaries at the Union were Winthrop Mackworth Praed; Alexander Cockburn, now Lord Chief Justice of England; Robert Hilyard, afterwards eminent at the bar; Benjamin Hall Kennedy, afterwards Head-master of Shrewsbury; Tooke, the son of the political economist, who died young, with great promise of future distinction; Charles Buller; and Charles Villiers, one of the earliest, the ablest, and the most disinterested apostles of Free-trade.

It was at the instance of his friend Alexander Cockburn that my father joined this club. His first speech, delivered late in the evening, was a defence of Praed, from a personal attack made upon him by his intimate friend Hilyard, for some alleged misdemeanour in the honorary office of treasurer to the club. This speech, short and simple, but spoken in earnest, was successful. In his next speech, however, not spoken till the following term, he fairly broke down. That failure induced him to study, and endeavour to remedy, his defects as a speaker; but though his speeches were considered good

* From an unpublished Note.

by his contemporaries, on account of the knowledge and intellectual fulness they displayed, it was not till long afterwards that he succeeded in speaking them effectively. His first oratorical triumph was on the Conservative side of the question. The subject of debate was a comparison between the political constitutions of England and the American United States. Praed, and most of the crack speakers, asserted the superiority of republican institutions; and the question was about to be put to the vote, when my father presumed to say a word in favour of the British constitution. He spoke with conviction, and a knowledge of the subject which surprised his rivals. This speech at once placed him in the foremost rank of the young debaters of the club; and he subsequently passed through all the grades of its official distinctions, as secretary, treasurer, and president.

His maiden speech in Parliament was, however, on behalf of Reform.

Dr Arnold has divided reformers into two classes, one of which he calls *popular*, and the other *liberal*, distinguishing the latter as those who aim rather at *improvement* than at *liberty*, in the ordinary political sense. The distinction seems arbitrary; for all that promises improvement must augment the only liberty worth having. But it is, at any rate, in this latter sense that my father was throughout his life a reformer.

Whether as an author — standing apart from all literary cliques and coteries; or as a politician—never wholly subject to the exclusive dictation of any political party; he always thought and acted in sympathy with every popular aspiration for the political, social, and intellectual *improvement* of the whole national life.

Thus, in a series of letters which in 1846 he addressed to Lord John Russell on the prospects and policy of the Russell Cabinet (and which, though commenced with a view to publication, were never either printed or completed), he writes :—

"Most Administrations enter office with a programme of the proceedings which are to characterise their policy and record its benefits. It is not your fault that this programme is less stirring and animated than that of your predecessors. It is not your fault if reforms with which you have identified an illustrious career are now effected, and you have reduced the number of abuses which you can promise to remove.

"The utmost verge to which the spirit of progress will bear you, supported by Property ever cautious, and Intelligence never rash, you have wellnigh reached—so far, at least, as that progress is directed to *objects purely political, ameliorations purely constitutional.*

"Rightly, to my judgment, therefore, have you turned your attention to those evils which lie below the surface of party. The ground is clear of weeds, but the richness of the harvest will depend on upturning the subsoil. Wisely have you seized the occasion, whilst party voices are mute, to address yourself to the wants of a nation. Nobly, if you fulfil the mission you announce, will you have crowned a life which, more than any other one man's life since the Restoration, has so connected itself with truths vindicated, and things done—that your biography is the history of great events. Nor will your latest be your least achievement, if you warm into action those words so dead and cold on the lips of sciolists, and in the pages of dreamers—Social Reform.

"Social Reform! Your Lordship could not be disap-

pointed if the phrase created a languid expectation. It is a sound to carry delight to the heart of some earnest philanthropist, or to set in movement the restless brain of some speculator in moral problems. But the mass of the public says 'Good,' and settles back to the business of life. You, with your large experience of mankind, were doubtless prepared for this apathy. You knew that interest in Ministerial announcements is proportioned, not to the gravity of the undertakings proposed, but to their connection with the questions which most angrily divided our opinions, or recently animated our passions.

"The working classes in our towns have been hitherto aroused only by reforms connected with constitutional change. They have been so impressed by their favourite orators with the belief that you must change a constitution in order to effect a reform, that they have neglected even to think about reforms which the present machinery suffices to effect. They have been told so often that the storm clears the air, that they look upon storms as the only purifiers of the atmosphere.

"The middle class, into which it has been the object of all recent legislation to throw the preponderating power, and for which, indeed, we have of late years almost exclusively legislated (rendering, it is true, benefits to other orders, but only indirectly, and as the contingent results of liberal concessions to the one essentially favoured)—the middle class, I say, engaged as it is in money-making, and not seeing exactly how social reforms are to influence the money markets, or enlarge its sphere of pecuniary speculation, limits its expectations to some scheme for the regulation of railroads.

"The more privileged orders—in whom the spirit of party is, rigidly speaking, the strongest—foresee in

legislation for purely moral ameliorations no opening for the appeal to prejudice and the stimulus to passion which are the immemorial resources of party chiefs.

"But below the surface-public, is ever that important and thoughtful essence of the life of nations—the tranquil people. Too much do we confound the public with the people. As well confound the cuticle with the heart, or the wave with the ocean."

These words very fairly indicate the general point of view from which the writer of them, on all occasions and in every period of his life, regarded his own duties and responsibilities, both as a politician and a man of letters. To improve every class, to reconcile all classes, to injure and to alienate none; to elevate, by the sympathising efforts of each, the moral and intellectual level of all; such were the civic objects on behalf of which he laboured. At no period of his career as a public man did he obey the rule laid down for political life by 'Honest Jack Lee,' who, when some one praised the good looks of the Duke of Richmond, exclaimed, 'Good-looking? What business have you to say that? That is for his party to say, and for us to deny. He is hideous.'

Differing in his mental tendencies from many of the special aims appropriated to political action by Whigs, Tories, and Radicals, he had yet points of political sympathy with all of them; and although he was never the mechanically subservient adherent of any party, yet he energetically co-operated with each, according as he found in it, with regard to some practical definite question, a political force congenial with one or other of those principles which he never greatly modified.

Thus, whilst acting with the Conservatives on other

questions, he spoke and voted with the Liberals on the question of the newspaper stamp; and after cordially co-operating with the Liberals in their efforts to obtain representative reform, he refused to follow that party the moment it inscribed foremost on its banner a demand for the total and immediate abolition of the Corn-laws.

When he first entered public life the national mind was deeply agitated by the question of Parliamentary Reform; and being convinced that the people of this country had then outgrown its representative system, he at once enlisted in the ranks of those who carried the Reform Bill of 1832.

Subsequent to the passage of that measure into law, he supported with zeal the leaders of the Whig party, because he mistrusted the capacity of those who had uncompromisingly opposed the measure to deal, advantageously for the highest interests of the country, with the political situation forced upon their acceptance by its enactment. In a private memorandum, which must, I think, have been written in 1837 or 1838, shortly after the accession of the present sovereign, he contrasts the state of the empire and of public feeling at that time with the condition of the country when Lord Grey's Government first came into power, and the happy auspices under which the young Queen had recently ascended the throne with the gloomy and ominous circumstances in which William the Fourth succeeded to the crown. "Insurrection in the counties, self-elected parliaments in the towns, disorder and disloyalty in the metropolis," replaced by a state of things which satisfactorily proved that "all the progressive intelligence and all the augmented liberties of the people have only served to give tranquillity to the empire, and deepen

the popular veneration for the throne." And then he adds, "The Ministers to whom we owe these guarantees of order and prosperity, so long as they remain sensible of their true position, the position of a mediating Government between perilous extremes, must continue to represent the only Administration worthy of public confidence."

In this sentence the Conservative principle is clearly defined and adopted as the motive for supporting a Liberal Government. And, indeed, at no time of his life had my father any intellectual sympathy either with the exclusively material aims and locally limited views of the middle-class Liberals, or with the programme of extreme Radicalism, which seemed to him unpractical, and in some respects unpatriotic.

Yet it was with the Radicals he acted in supporting the Ballot, which the Whigs at that time wisely refused to adopt as one of their watch-cries. As a young man, he advocated the adoption of the Ballot because he believed in its promised efficacy as a guarantee for purity of election. That is a desideratum which must be cherished by every honest politician, whether Conservative or Liberal. Subsequently, however, he deprecated its adoption, because the result of its adoption in other countries appeared to him to contradict the promises, and belie the expectations, of its advocates in our own. To the best of my belief, this is the only question on which my father ever changed his mind. But in reality the question is a mechanical and not a constitutional one; and therefore the operation of the new mode of voting will, in all probability, correspond neither with the hopes nor the fears of those who have debated its adoption as a constitutional change.

If the country be Conservative, the Ballot will be Conservative; if the country be Radical, so will be the Ballot. It may perhaps intensify the expression of public opinion; it can have no power to change the current of it. In such a country as ours, public opinion oscillates from time to time, and according to the circumstances of the moment, between stationary and motive tendencies. Its index will mark the degree of those oscillations, but cannot determine their direction.

During this early period of his public life, my father was one of the Committee which investigated the monopoly of the East India Company. He also induced the House to appoint a Committee of Inquiry into the Drama, with a view to extinguishing the monopoly then enjoyed by the two Royal Theatres.

It cannot be said, unfortunately, that this change has effected the object on behalf of which it was advocated.

On the contrary, under the management of Mr Macready, the last of our great actors, we had still at Drury Lane a well-trained and excellent company of first-rate performers, both in tragedy and comedy, who were willing to co-operate for the worthy representation on that stage of noble plays. To the conscientiousness and talents of such a company, dramatic authors could safely confide their reputation. Hence, in that department which criticism has ever recognised as the highest, our literature was enriched with many excellent acting dramas by men of intellectual eminence.

Of the theatrical stars then collected into a single constellation, those which are not yet altogether extinguished are now scattered over the minor theatres, where, as lone stars, they glimmer with "ineffectual fires," amidst the dense insignificance of inferior actors, ill trained even

for the performance of inferior pieces. I trust that I shall not appear to underrate the literary ability which still finds expression in dramatic form, if I notice with regret that the many ingenious pieces which are now written for the best London theatres have no pretension to the higher order of poetry, and can hardly be regarded as conducive to the noblest uses and achievements of the stage; whilst, on the other hand, the so-called dramatic department of modern English poetry, as represented by those admirable works to which the genius of such writers as Mr Browning, Sir Henry Taylor, and Mr Swinburne, has given dramatic shape, is more or less unfit for effective stage representation, and has, practically, added nothing to the acting *repertoire* of our theatrical managers. In those countries where a national stage still exists, supported by the State, it gives effective dramatic form to the highest literary genius of the nation. The refined power of a Delaunay can impart a peculiar charm even to the purely lyric pathos of an Alfred de Musset; and it would be difficult to mention many German poets of the first rank, since Goethe, who have not written for the German stage. Even Heine, an essentially lyric poet, was ambitious of fame as a dramatist. But what English poet would now instinctively turn to the English stage for the most effective expression, and the highest test, of his genius? and what Englishman, if he have any pride in the art and literature of his country, can contemplate, without profound humiliation, the present condition of that stage? To me it seems that those by whom such humiliation must be most deeply felt, because in their case it should be accompanied by self-reproach, are our statesmen and legislators.

When Count Stephen Szechenyi devoted his life to revive the national spirit, and reconquer the historic constitution of his country (which will long remember him as "the great Magyar"), his first act was to found a national stage. We cannot shut up theatres. We must either tolerate them as places of public amusement, so coarse and so unintelligent as to be shunned with disgust by manly intellect and womanly modesty, or else we must employ them as worthy vehicles for noble poetry, lofty thoughts, and moral truths. Were the State to set apart but a single theatre for such a purpose, the expense would be small, and amply repaid by the gradual but sure effect—not upon the public taste merely (for that is a small matter), but upon the public character—of those elevating and refining influences for which a national stage, when worthily occupied, has ever been the most effective vehicle. Pay the rent of one such theatre; intrust it rent-free to some manager of character and honour, upon condition that all vice shall be excluded from the side-scenes, and that the stage itself be devoted to the fitting representation of the higher drama. Let the public understand that the educational functions of such a drama are recognised by the State, like those of the pulpit and the school. Let the theatre thus distinguished be deserving of the countenance of the sovereign. In no place of amusement will the presence of royalty be more welcomed, or more beneficent. A loyal nation loves to see that rank to which it renders the homage of a wise convention rendering in return a noble homage to those masterpieces of native genius and imaginative thought, which are both the representatives and the monuments of a people. It has been said by a German publicist that the history of a nation is often only the chronicle of its

national egotism, whilst a nation's literature is always the biography of its humanity. The favour bestowed by royalty on whatever enriches this national property is one of the light, but not ignoble, duties of the Crown.

Is all this impracticable? If so, the degeneration of the English stage is hopeless. My father's speech upon this subject will be found in the present collection. But the chief efforts of his early Parliamentary life were directed towards the removal of the taxes upon knowledge —by the extinction of the newspaper stamp, bestowing copyright on original matter, and reducing postage for the transmission of journals and other printed papers. He was the first to agitate for this reform, and to suggest in full and definite detail the means by which it might be effected without loss of revenue. In 1832 he demanded a committee of inquiry upon the subject. In 1834, and again in 1835, he renewed the question with great energy. He lived to see his views adopted by the House, though not until long afterwards (in 1855), and to support by his vote from the Opposition benches the Minister (Sir George Cornewall Lewis) who finally carried them out. His early speeches on this subject, which are full of facts still interesting, were reprinted and widely circulated throughout the country by an association then formed to promote the movement he had initiated for the abolition of the obnoxious imposts; and at the next general election he received overtures of support from three different constituencies. He selected Lincoln; and in 1832 the electors of that borough returned him to Parliament as one of their representatives.

What chiefly induced him to seek their suffrages, rather than those of any other Liberal constituency, was the

fact that the Liberal electors of Lincoln were, as he was himself, opposed to the repeal of the Corn-laws.

On this economic question my father's opinions,* formed early in life, deeply entertained, and never modified, were always in strong and conscientious antagonism to those which were by degrees so generally adopted and so vehemently advocated by all Liberal politicians, as to dictate at last the exclusive shibboleth of the whole Liberal party. When he joined that party this question was an open question. When he withdrew from that party, it had become a test question. I shall venture to fortify this assertion by a short extract from one of the speeches addressed by him to his electors at Lincoln in reference to the circumstances which had just then placed the late Sir Robert Peel in office.

In alluding to the Budget, he pointed out that there was a great deficiency in the revenue. "That deficiency had been caused" (he said) "by four things. Firstly, seven millions of taxes had been taken off. Secondly, we had been obliged to go to war to preserve our trade and possessions in the Colonies. Thirdly, the Government had yielded to the unanimous wishes of the people in reducing the postage upon letters. Fourthly, the increased morality of the people, diminishing their consumption of spirituous liquors, had occasioned a falling off in the duties of excise. At the same time there was great distress amongst the commercial and manufacturing classes. What was to be done? By a new tax you might repair the revenue, but you would only increase the distress. The Government therefore did not propose a tax. They proposed certain financial reforms which might at once recruit the revenue, give new energy to

* They will be found fully set forth in his 'Letters to John Bull.'

trade, and make some of the necessaries of life cheaper to the great body of the people. *Now, I agreed cordially to this general proposition; but I differed on the single detail of the Corn-laws.* In this I contend that I was consistent. Mr Huskisson, the great advocate of Free-trade, once said—'Give me Free-trade, but let the last thing in which I have it be the property in land.'"

The speaker then entered into an elaborate defence of protection in corn, upon political as well as economic grounds. He was not himself a landlord at that time, and certainly his views, whether right or wrong, were formed with a conscientious regard to national and imperial, as apart from class or local interests. And he concluded: "These are my sentiments on the Corn-laws. I will not vote for the abolition of them; I will not vote for the Government proposition of an eight or nine shilling duty, because I believe it to be but a step to that abolition. But I am ready to allow that you must take the matter of the Corn-laws into serious consideration; and I do believe that by a judicious mixture of the fixed duty and the graduated scale, you may give great relief to the manufacturers, and at the same time not diminish the proper protection to land."

Holding these opinions from the moment he joined the Liberal party, it is obvious that when adhesion to the economic doctrine of free trade in corn became the sole recognised test of adhesion to the party itself, my father's connection with it was suspended by the force of circumstance and conviction. Nor was his subsequent final severance from that party provoked by himself. He quitted public life in 1841, and did not re-enter it till the year 1852. It is little to the credit of the Whig

party that during those eleven years its local agents and political leaders consistently endeavoured to prevent the return to Parliament of a man whose timely and eloquent support was acknowledged by Lord Melbourne as one of the causes which had expedited the return of the Whig Government to power.

When, by the death of Earl Spencer in 1834, Lord Althorp was obliged to surrender the leadership of the House of Commons, the Whigs were abruptly dismissed from office by the king, and Mr (afterwards Sir James) Hudson was sent to Rome to summon home Sir Robert Peel, to whom his Majesty confided the task of forming a new Administration. At this moment Mr Bulwer was the only one of its supporters who rushed to the rescue of the fallen Government. His 'Letter to a late Cabinet Minister on the Crisis,' which was then published, produced an immense and immediate effect upon the public mind. The first edition of it was exhausted on the day of its publication, and fourteen other large editions within a fortnight afterwards. At the price of 3s. 6d., it reached twenty editions, and was then reprinted with a yet wider circulation in a cheaper form. Lord Melbourne frequently assured my father that he attributed in no small degree to the influence of this pamphlet the result of the general election which took place shortly after Sir Robert Peel's return to England, and the subsequent restoration of the Liberal Government. In re-forming that Government, nothing could be handsomer, or more generously appreciative, than the terms in which Lord Melbourne pressed on my father's acceptance an offer of office. It was gratefully declined, partly from a disinclination to surrender political independence, but chiefly from a disinclination to suspend the literary labours in which he

was then engaged. During the ten years in which he had sat in Parliament on the Liberal side of the House, he had spoken and voted against the still tolerated property in slaves. He had, both by his speeches and his writings in the 'New Monthly' (which he then edited), energetically opposed the Coercion Bill for Ireland, and the coercion policy in Canada. He had obtained an Act conferring copyrights on dramatic authors, and had originated what ultimately led to international copyright. He had obtained important ameliorations in the taxation of newspapers, and prepared the way for the complete abolition of all imposts upon public information. He had by his contributions to political literature suggested many of those reforms which have since been effected in the Poor-laws. He had supported the amendment of the Factory Act of 1833, and had urged the removal of the site of the Royal Academy from the National Gallery—a change which was effected thirty years later. He had spoken and written in defence of the principle of an Established Church, but also as an ardent advocate of justice to Dissenters on the question of Church rates. He fully acknowledged the difficulty and delicacy of that question, but he considered it a pedantic frivolity to treat such a question solely from an antiquarian point of view. Whilst recognising the antiquity of the custom which laid upon parishioners the expenses of church repairs, he challenged on its own ground that appeal to antiquity which was raised by the opponents of all compromise on this question, by pointing to the greater antiquity of the law that the Church should pay its own repairs from the proceeds of its own property. On the whole, his position in regard to Church questions was substantially the same at all periods of his

political life. He cordially approved and supported the principle of Ecclesiastical Establishment. He believed that in the occasional abuses and incidental objections, to which (in common with all political institutions) this one is liable, men were too apt to lose sight of its advantages. Amongst those advantages he recognised the civilisation diffused throughout the country by a body of educated clergy; the schools established by them in the remotest rural districts; the capital introduced by them into the poorest villages; the emulation they excite among the Dissenters themselves—emulation in intelligence and respectability. But he conceived that the less obnoxious this principle could be made to Nonconformists, the better it would be for the interests of the Church; and therefore he strongly deprecated whatever tended to bring it into daily and hourly collision with the conscientious scruples of sectarians, and the pecuniary interests of lessees and ratepayers. He also supported the removal of Jewish disabilities; and, though himself a protectionist in corn, it was he who introduced to public notice the once popular "Corn-law Rhymer," Ebenezer Elliot. It was at this period of his life (1833) that he published the political treatise entitled 'England and the English,' of which Mr Mill has remarked in his Autobiography, that it was much in advance of the time. His intellectual industry and fertility during these years were really astonishing. While assiduously attending Parliament, and sharing in its debates, he was not only editing a semi-political and literary periodical to which he himself largely contributed, but also rapidly throwing off that remarkable series of fictions which required for their composition constantly fresh reading, and an untroubled serenity and freedom of pure imagination.

During this period of his Parliamentary career he also made some effective speeches on behalf of municipal reform. But his greatest Parliamentary success was, no doubt, his speech urging the immediate emancipation of the West Indian slaves, which the Government, in deference to the Colonial Legislatures, had intended to postpone for two years. He carried this question by a majority of two only. But it was one of those rare occasions in which opinion has been converted by eloquence in the course of a debate. The speaker was assured after the division by three members, who had intended to vote on the other side of the question, that their intention had been changed by his arguments. He received for this speech, which was printed and circulated by that association, the thanks of the Anti-Slavery Society.

My father lost his seat in 1841; and by his mother's will he succeeded, at her death in 1843, to the estate of her family in Hertfordshire. During the eleven years of his absence from Parliament, though busily engaged in literary pursuits, and the management of a property which he greatly improved, he was not an indifferent spectator of public events; and, before resuming this short narrative of his Parliamentary life, I propose to illustrate his opinions upon questions of public interest, both at home and abroad, by a few extracts from some of the private papers in which I find them recorded by himself.

I have said that he was at all times an earnest and spontaneous advocate of every reform in the relations between the Government and the governed, the State and the people, which aimed at *public improvement* by moral and intellectual means.

On this subject, in its relation both to popular instruction and to literature and art, I find in those unfinished and unpublished letters to Lord John (now Earl) Russell, to which reference has already been made, some general reflections which may still, perhaps, be read with interest. They contribute nothing to the practical solution of the difficulties which, since they were written, have rendered the whole question of public education one of the most urgent, and yet the most delicate, with which statesmen have still to grapple; but, from a biographical point of view, I venture to think them not unworthy of preservation, as illustrations of their writer's intellectual temperament and tendencies. These letters I have found in a very fragmentary condition, without beginning or end. They were, apparently, never completed or revised. They were certainly never published; and it is therefore to be presumed, either that the writer was dissatisfied with the form in which he had expressed his views, or else that he considered the moment inopportune for their public expression.

These considerations, however, cannot apply to the present publication, except in so far as they seem to indicate the point of view from which the following fragment should now be regarded.

Letter II.

(*Fragment.*)

Circa 1846.

* * * "To the people two kinds of education are necessary—1st, the intellectual; 2d, the industrial. It would be well if, in the last, one establishment in every district could, though not wholly maintained by the

Government, receive its encouragement and support. Such establishments would vary in the details of instruction, according to the habits of the surrounding population. In provinces purely agricultural, the best modes of agriculture would be taught;* in provinces bordering on manufacturing towns, the instruction would assume a higher class, and comprehend mechanical philosophy and the arts of design.

"In the metropolis itself (too much neglected) such schools would inculcate various branches of industrial knowledge to the unfortunate children of both sexes who now are literally sent to the house of correction, or transported to penal settlements, 'to keep them out of harm's way.' It is but the other day that I read in the newspapers an account of three young girls charged with some petty theft for which one, as the oldest offender, was sentenced to transportation for seven years; the other two were let off with three months' imprisonment. The one transported drops her most grateful courtesy; she thanks the Court for sending her from this country where she can come to no good; she declares that it was from the hope of that sentence that

* "And even in provinces purely agricultural, the instruction would vary according to the main produce of the soil. In Kent, for instance, much attention would be devoted to the culture of hops. All that the ingenuity of science could bring to bear upon lessening the cost and the uncertainty of that most expensive and most precarious of crops would be diffused through lecture and experiment. So in Kent, Herefordshire, and other orchard counties, such seminaries would render popular the best researches in orchard cultivation. So in Ulster or in Sussex, the improvement of flax would demand the attention of the tutors. Establishments thus founded would make much that is now partial in agriculture general, and thereby augment the wealth of the country. Experiment would show what other soils in England would bear the hops of Kent, the apples of Herefordshire, the flax of Sussex. A proprietor desirous of testing such improvements would know where to apply for persons duly and scientifically educated to carry them out with the least cost, and the best probability of success."

she committed, and induced her accomplices to commit, the offence. The other two hear the mild sentence of three months' imprisonment with dismay; they burst into tears; they implore the Court to send them abroad; they say in the same words as the envied convict, 'We can come to no good; we are poor creatures, without father or mother; we can't get our bread honestly; transport us.' Moved by this prayer the Court positively assents, and these poor young Englishwomen, whose very petition shows their hatred of vice, are sent out from our community. My Lord, if we had such establishments as I describe, do you not think it would have been better to have sent them to school, to have taught them how to get their bread in their own land, and to have taught their children after them to thank heaven that they had been born under a Government which aided the homeless and the orphan in the struggle not to sin? Such a Government you have the power to make your own.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"EDWARD LYTTON."

LETTER III.

"DEAR LORD JOHN,—Permit me now the natural corollary from the propositions in my last.

"I enter upon a field hitherto generally neglected by statesmen, lying remote from party discussion, and not at the first glance comprehended in the chart of popular reform.

"Yet this is the true nursery-ground from which all

that can fertilise the mind, and enrich the industry of thought, is gathered and transplanted.

"You do not complete by a sound scheme the moral and intellectual culture of the nation if you neglect the parent-ground of all cultivation. Consummate the survey of popular schools by considering the arch-normal school of all—the literature, the art, the science, which furnish the materials of all education, which constitute the province and provide the nourishment of moral and intellectual growth. These are the domain of the mind. Instruction is but the implement that tills it.

"Is it not a trick and a delusion to the young student to coax and decoy him on to that point in which he may become a useful craftsman, an intelligent drudge, but to hold before him, as a terrible example of punishment for excess, the rewards you will bestow on him if his zeal kindle him to genius, if his toils swell to the originality of knowledge? Maintain your present modes of rewarding literature, and you do not act fairly to the multitude if you do not proclaim that, if one of the pupils you summon to your schools should so far excel the rest as to be in his turn the diffuser of instruction and delight, you have for him no employment in your State, no prize amongst its honours; and that when life, health, industry, and talent are fairly worn out, and the fragments of them left, all you can offer him is the chance of an annuity which you would apologise for offering to your valet!

"You count upon awaking a moral ambition for intellectual eminence amongst the people—you need their co-operation. Are these to be gained while you hold up the beggary of literature to public pity and disdainful wonder? No, my Lord; if you invite your

acute and practical countrymen to share in the banquet of letters, you must give some honour to those who find the feast. Nor do I believe that a much more popular act even with the populace could be conceived than one which should deal with the peaceful civilisers of the nation in a spirit more worthy of their merits and our obligations. For the literary man, beset with rivals in his own sphere, persecuted as he often is by the opinions he disturbs, calumniated by the jealousies he provokes, is always popular with the masses. Like themselves, he is a workman. There is a secret but an imperishable bond between the writer and the people. Not the silk-worm lives more for the weaver than the author for mankind. If in his own character he be the most selfish of egotists, in his character of writer he exists but for others. There is no people where there are no writers. I submit to you, therefore, my Lord, some extension of the Fund set apart for art, literature, and science. It is not for me to presume to suggest the sum requisite for such a purpose, though I think a sum not larger than that devoted by the State to a single one of its principal officers will suffice. I would only venture to suggest a wider range between the maximum and the minimum of the existing limit. You cannot at present give more than £300 a-year to your greatest poet, or your ablest philosopher. You do not give to the last, and he is not necessarily the least upon the list, a smaller pittance than £50. Would it be too much to hope that the maximum might reach £500 a-year, and the minimum not dwindle below £100?

"Yet I cannot consider that this pension list, whatever its amount, does of itself suffice for the object in view—viz., the exaltation of intellectual advantages in

the eyes of those whom you summon to cultivate them. Observe that here, and indeed throughout, I argue less on behalf of literary men themselves than of the people, whom you would allure to partake of the benefits conferred by them. Literature may exist in its highest forms, though a Government give no honour to the work, and though the nation starve the professor. 'Don Quixote' is not the less genially produced, though Cervantes composes it as a prisoner, and goes to his grave a pauper. But it is wholly another question if you desire to make literature universal. In that case, the multitude are attracted by the honour it receives. No State can busy itself in exciting genius to masterpieces—all that it should do is to excite the people to mental exertions, and prove to them that whatever is excellent interests the State, and has a claim to its distinctions and rewards.

"I do not advance the absurd doctrine that because a man is a writer he is therefore fit for public employment. I only complain that it often happens that because he is a writer all public employment is shut out from him. I know a melancholy instance, not a rare one, of a man who had not only pleased the public, but who had materially served the Government by his compositions. A periodical in which he was engaged changed its politics; with that change (for he changed not) he lost the sole certain source of his existence. I loved this man, and respected him. I knew from his inalienable probity, his intense application, his great adaptability of resources, his ready promptitude, and his docile understanding, that he could become an invaluable public servant. My Lord, I wearied such friends as I possessed in the Government of that day on his behalf. They

acknowledged his services, they recognised his talents; even for my sake, I believe, they were willing to assist him. But their answer was, 'What is in our gift for a literary man? Had he been a lawyer, had he been a clergyman, had he been a soldier or sailor, something might be found. For a writer we have nothing.' And nothing my poor client obtained.

"What are the results of education, carried to the highest? Art, literature, science. These are the triple flowers of the divine plant, and these flowers in return give the seed from which the plant is eternally renewed. Do not deceive yourself with the belief that you can make intellectual culture the noble necessity of the community, unless you can show to the community that you are prepared to honour the highest results to which culture can arrive. Is it so now? Look to the encouragement which the State gives to art, literature, and science. To art, beyond the mere grant to a society wholly irresponsible, it affords no encouragement at all. You have a National Gallery for the dead—a fitting institution to which I give all the homage that is due. But you have no gallery for the living. Of late (and this is an era) you have afforded some stimulus to one branch in art, that of fresco-painting. But this, you are already aware, is extremely partial in its effects. You do not find, I apprehend, the highest of your artists amongst the competitors, partly because it hardly suits their dignity to submit their works to a tribunal the judgment of which is not precisely as sound as that of the Medici; partly because fresco-painting is not perhaps that kind of painting in which their genius has been taught to excel. I do not blame this attempt to encourage one department of art—I applaud it. But do not think this

is analogous to a generous and genuine homage to art's haughty and multiform divinity. We are told by an old Greek author of some wise man who thought to save his bees the trouble of a flight to Hymettus—cut off their wings and set the flowers before them. The bees did not flourish upon the allowance. Let art select its own flowers at its own will, then buy the honey if you please. In a word, add to your National Gallery for the old masters a gallery for the living. Be not led away by the notion that the public are all-sufficient patrons. The public buy what they require, and that is all. Those individuals that compose the public have no houses large enough for historical pictures. They have not always the taste for high art. They have not always the money to pay the high prices that modern painters are compelled to charge if they really devote long time and patient labour to their *chefs-d'œuvre*. Hence most painters, depending solely on the patronage of the public, either turn portrait-painters (for every one likes a portrait of himself, his wife, his baby, or even his pet dog); or they find that, while the large or elaborate picture obtains no buyers, the small squares of canvas hastily struck off, coming more within the means of the public, bring large returns. The public love names. A man likes to say, 'I have a picture by Tinto or Finto;' and he thinks that equivalent to saying, 'I have Tinto's masterpiece;' or, 'this picture took Finto three patient years to complete.' It is but just to our artists to give them that higher field of emulation which every other State professing to honour art liberally bestows. * * * *

"I have already touched, my Lord—as connected with this part of my subject—the main blot upon the justice of the State and the gratitude of the people.

It is the provision at present allowed to the literature, art, and science of three nations—a yearly pension list of £1200 a-year. * * * *

"Just conceive the false position of a statesman calling aloud upon the people to read, and write, and study, while he is forced (if he speak truth) to acknowledge that the worst thing that can happen to any pupil so encouraged, is to read deeply enough to instruct others, write well enough to charm multitudes, grow entitled to the gratitude of his country, and be referred by it in old age and sickness to a claim upon the Pension List!

"Surely, if your Lordship will look somewhat narrowly into the various departments of State patronage, some places may be found for which literary capacities may be no disqualification, which, as a general rule, might be set apart for those familiarised to the habit of acquiring details with ease, and conveying information with vigour and precision. I should not expect to see such places fall to the lot of the higher and more popular authors, to whom, not from merit so much, but from the choice of subject, literature is an available profession; the choice would be better made from writers of a graver class, and to whom business would not be incompatible with the occasional exercise of their abstruse studies. His duties at the India Board have not unfitted Mr J. Mill for the composition of his noble History of Logic, and the History of Logic did not unfit him for the India Board. A few such selections made with judgment and discretion would do much to render literature a thing less apart from the State, would afford to the writer the easy leisure for many a valuable work, give to the Government many a competent and intelligent administrant, and afford to the people no uninstructive ex-

amples of your sincerity in the homage you assert to knowledge.

"Beyond this, and with far greater diffidence, I venture to hazard two suggestions. 1stly, In any great scheme of national education, you will scarcely suffer, I think, your endeavours to cease with the age of childhood. Man, when engaged in labour, always remains a child. Always do we have something to learn; but mostly those employed in practical pursuits, in which every day science hints some improvement, or startles prejudice with some innovation. Hence, imperceptibly—hence, in the recognition of this truth—arose the Mechanics' Institutes, colleges for the labouring adult.

"Of these auxiliaries already founded, but far from maturely efficient, I apprehend your scheme for diffusing knowledge will scarcely neglect the valuable co-operation. There is nothing (your observation has doubtless already made you aware) which is more readily sought after in these societies than lectures by competent persons. Would it be possible to establish a certain number of professorships, with moderate salaries, but some social designations of respect, whose duty it might be to teach to audiences so prepared to favour, and so interested on the subject, all that science in its rapid progress can bring to bear upon their calling. In manufacturing towns or in agricultural districts, I need scarcely say that such discourses from authorities of high repute would signally facilitate the admission of improvements, would communicate the experiences and inventions of other countries, would diffuse and circulate truths that come home to the business of the listeners, and add to the wealth of the nation. Salaries so given would be repaid to the public in every field where a new crop is

produced or the old increased; in every factory where the improvement of a machine lightens the labour or refines the work. That in such an undertaking, if put on its right footing, and treated with dignity by the State, you would have the cheerful assistance of the first scientific teachers who have turned their philosophy to such practical uses, I have no doubt. And here again you would effect that which to satiety I seek to impress—viz., connection between the highest intellect and the most popular instruction.

"2dly, My Lord—and this proposition I make still more timidly than the first; aware as I am of the ridicule which, in a system profoundly aristocratic, attaches to all attempts to claim for merit some slight share in the distinction monopolised by rank—or in a community mainly occupied by traffic, to inculcate the doctrine, that there are other rewards than money.

"The distinctions of honour that England affords are twofold,—that of titles—that of decorations.

"With the exception of knighthood, titles are hereditary. They require, therefore, and justly, the possession of a certain fortune to save any privileged order from the worst curse that can befall it—the sullen pride or the abject neediness of beggared rank. Necessarily, then, such titles are not open to all merit; they are open only to merit accompanied with wealth; they are almost at the command of wealth without the merit.

"Sir Robert Peel offered Mr Southey a baronetcy, which Mr Southey sensibly refused on the plea of want of fortune to support the dignity. So obvious is it that these hereditary titles cannot answer the purpose of awarding merit or honouring intellect independent of fortune, that I need waste no words in support of so

evident a proposition. The order of knighthood unconnected with decorations has been so perverted from its original character and intention—so separated from all dignifying association, and appropriated to civic offices, to some legal appointments, with now and then an exception in favour of medical men—that it would be far easier to give weight to a new title than to restore its noble character to an old one so long degraded.

"The Crown has next at its gift the decorations of the Garter and the Bath. The first, in its origin an essentially military distinction, is now almost the exclusive property of royal foreigners and the heads of our great houses. A Garter is vacant; you have but to consider who is the man belonging to the party of the Minister of the highest rank, to be sure that the vacancy will fall upon him. He has a right to complain of slight if he is overlooked. The Order of the Bath, which was at its origin an almost purely civil dignity, now supersedes the Garter, and becomes a military distinction, with some reservations in favour of diplomatists. The orders of Scotland and Ireland are the privileges of the nobles in those sections of the empire.

"For the people there is, then, no distinction whatever. Every other Government, even under absolute monarchies, has at its disposal various dignities, which are objects of emulation to the mass of the people. In that country which boasts itself most free, in which the people are professedly the most regarded—in which certainly the people are the real source of all greatness and all wealth—in that country alone the people are excluded from every participation in the testimonials to merit or the marks of honour. Howsoever a man may have adorned or served his country, unless he is comparatively rich,

you can give him no title. Unless he is an earl, you cannot give him the Garter; unless he is soldier, sailor, or diplomatist, you cannot give him the Bath; and even the dignity of Doctor is conferred by the Universities, not the State. Would it be against the spirit of the constitution, against the temper of the age, against the principles by which ambition is stirred and emulation aroused, if the Crown were advised to institute a new order, open to the mass of this great people, and to which merit, comprehending indeed birth and fortune, but wholly independent of them, should constitute the sole claim? An order which the Marquess of Northampton might share with Professor Airy or Mr Babbage; Lord Mahon with Mr Moore,; Lord George Hill, who has improved the population of a district, with the manufacturer who has invented some signal improvement in a machine. I pass over, as wholly irrelevant, the ridicule of would-be sages upon medals of silver and shreds of ribbon. All things, even to gold itself, have their value, as the tokens of what society admits them to represent. I could understand the ridicule, if in England you had no titles, and no decorations at all; but I cannot understand that you should admit their partial application—that you should allow how powerfully such incentives act upon men of one rank, and yet suppose them no incentives at all to men of another; that you should allow that their hope animates the noblest heart that beats beneath a uniform, and suppose it would be silent in the heart which human nature influences under a frock-coat. The question is not whether the State should have the gift of conferring marks of distinction—it has them already; but whether in a free country they should be confined to wealth, rank, and military achievements; whether, at a time when you

exhort the people to intellectual cultivation, intellectual eminence should be excluded from the favour of the Sovereign; whether alone to art, letters, and the peaceful improvers of mankind, the fount of honour shall be sealed. On these considerations I hazard the suggestion of an order to which merit shall give the claim—an order emanating from the Sovereign, but accessible to all her people—its decorations not given exclusively to the merit which is poor and low-born, or society, at once aristocratical and commercial, would not value them. But he indeed knows little of our higher orders who will not allow, that no aristocracy, except the Athenian, ever produced in all departments so large a proportion of eminent men. There will be selections enough from them to give to such a brotherhood whatever grace merit may take from high station; only let these lists be open to all competitors who write upon their shield, 'Service to Great Britain;'—whether that service be rendered in arts, letters, inventive improvement, great virtue, or useful deeds, let no party favour promote the undeserving or slight the meritorious. Surely such an institution is in harmony with the age. When Napoleon made himself member of the Institute, he said—'I am sure to be understood by the lowest drummer.' If one distinguishes men into the classes of military and civil, one establishes two orders, while there is but one nation; if one decrees honour only to soldiers, the nation goes for nothing—'*La nation ne serait plus rien;*' so said Napoleon when he founded the Legion of Honour—an institution which the subsequent abuses that have perverted its intention and lowered its dignity do not the less prove to have been based upon the profoundest views of human nature, and in the true spirit of generous legislation.

"Here, my Lord, I close these suggestions,—all, from the establishment of a village school, to the honours due to those deserts which each pupil sent to that school may attain,—all belonging, I believe, to any scheme, wide, sound, and comprehensive, for the encouragement of education and the diffusion of intelligence. Found schools, and starve the scholar—declaim on the rewards of intellectual accomplishment and civil virtue, and then exclude the highest specimens your declamation can produce from the service of the State and the honours of the Crown, and I warn you that you will place your edifice upon a hollow foundation, whilst you reject your surest co-operator in the moral spirit your system should animate and evoke; and that the common-sense of mankind will see that your object is not for the advancement of knowledge, but to contract its height whilst demarking its circumference. As the Chinese dwarf their oaks, you place a hoop of iron round the roots which you plant; and thus you will have stunted into a toy the branches which should be vocal with the birds of heaven, and the stem that should shoot the loftier with every storm that assails it.—I have the honour to be, dear Lord John Russell, &c. &c. &c.

"EDWARD LYTTON."

In printing these suggestions I am fully conscious of how much can be said against the possibility of their adoption, and even of the numerous objections which may be urged against the arguments on which they are founded. But, on the one hand, their elevation of patriotic purpose and nobility of aim are remarkable; whilst, on the other hand, I venture to think they reveal a know-

ledge of human nature too frequently absent from the modern school of politics. A Goethe administering a Weimar might have adopted these suggestions. An English Prime Minister, dependent on the support of a middle-class Parliament, might at least regret his inability to do so. And if the reader reject them as practical propositions, he may not the less respect them as the outlines of a picture formed by the writer in his own mind of that ideal State which no practical politician can hope to realise, but of which every thoughtful statesman has probably cherished, according to his character, some abstract conception which supplies the animating spirit and general tendency of his practical work as a public man.

I pass at once, however, to what I consider to be the most interesting and the most important of my father's political memoranda; those, namely, which were written in reference to foreign politics. Amongst them I find some observations on the then recent Anglo-French Alliance, which appear to me eminently deserving of attention.

I cannot but regard that alliance as the commencement of an epoch pregnant with diplomatic problems yet unsolved, and international revolutions yet incalculable; and I have perhaps had exceptional opportunities of studying its effect upon the continent of Europe, and on our relations with other Powers. In England, peculiar difficulties impede the formation of a well-instructed public opinion, and more especially the effective expression of it upon important questions of foreign policy, whilst there is yet time for such an opinion to control or guide the conduct of a Government in regard to them. In the first place, the English public takes no strong spontaneous interest in the general course of foreign

affairs. The complicated questions which eventually occasioned the outbreak of hostilities between Denmark and the two great German Powers, had for many years previously been a source of anxiety to every European Government; yet the English public was practically unconscious of their dangerous existence until our national honour had been seriously committed to a championship of one of the contending parties, from which our national prudence simultaneously recoiled. In the next place, the English Parliament has not yet succeeded in convincing any English Cabinet of its capacity to discuss foreign questions with advantage to national interests. When such questions are pending, Parliament is solemnly assured that by expressing any opinion about them, it will only embarrass or prevent the satisfactory settlement of them by her Majesty's responsible advisers. When such questions are settled, Parliament is civilly reminded of the futility of expressing its disapproval of a settlement which it cannot undo. This mode of dealing with great international questions is not efficient. Fortune is a fair player, and never checkmates a Government or a people without having first audibly cried 'Check!' It is our fault if we listen late to her warning cry. But late is better than never; and the recognition of past mistakes assists the avoidance of future failures. It is in that belief that I give publicity to the subjoined memorandum.

Memorandum on the Anglo-French Alliance.

By Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

1857-58.

"There is no country from the ambition of which England has so much to fear as France—no people so

easily aroused to a hostile sentiment against her as the French—no other Power which, since the Spanish Armada was scattered by the winds of heaven, has ever caused us to prepare against invasion.

"On the other hand, however, England is in every way most fitted to check the preponderance of France; because whilst she has the permanent interest, she has also, more than most nations, the permanent power to do so. And that not only by her fleets, but also by the superiority of her fiscal resources. It is the wealth of England that supplies the deficiencies of her own population and the smallness of her own land force, if she were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with any other Power. England is now richer than she was when Chatham helped by her subsidies the flagging resources of Frederick the Great; nor is she less able to gather round her the swords of other nations than she was when Marlborough defeated the armies of Louis XIV., with a force of which more than two-thirds were foreigners consolidated by English discipline, and commanded by English genius.

"But if England be thus peculiarly adapted in the eyes of foreign States to be the soul and centre of European organisation against any aggressive policy on the part of France, we may well conceive the dismay with which all such States would behold England suddenly withdrawn from their side, and united to the side of France. Nor were those who felt this dismay deceived by the reason for the alliance that created it which the admirers and apologists of that alliance alleged.

"England and France, thus united, it is said, can dictate to Europe the conditions of peace and war. But Europe does not like such dictation. Europe feels, moreover, that in such dictation it is France that would

dictate, and that England can only preserve the French alliance by ratifying the French decrees. Therefore, the inevitable effect of our alliance with France is to weaken our bonds with all other States. The only firm alliances are those founded on common interests. When England withdraws herself from the side of those States whose interest it has hitherto been to count upon her, not as the ally, but as the counterpoise of France, she inevitably loses their attachment, and excites, not their confidence, but their fear.

"This sentiment operates even beyond Europe. It is felt, though as yet obscurely, in Asia. It was expressed openly in America. Ask any American statesman why, at the commencement of the Russian war, there was so angry a feeling against England in the United States?—why so much of unreasoning bitterness was infused into the dispute about the enlistment of recruits on American soil? and you will be told that it had been the desire of all American statesmen that France and England should each stand, not, indeed, hostile to, but aloof from, the other; and that when England stood closely allied with France, she alienated herself from the instinctive policy of America.*

"Since then, gradually, almost imperceptibly, but surely and ever more and more, this alliance with France has forfeited for England the position she held in the respect and affection of European Powers; because

* In connection with this statement I request the reader to recall to his recollection not only the facts of French policy in Mexico, but also the sentiment of French policy towards the misinterpreted phenomena of the Civil War between the United States of America, at a time when English Governments were still boasting of this unnatural, insincere, and embarrassing alliance, in presence of their bewildered and discomfited well-wishers in both the New and the Old World.—L.

England no longer presents to those Powers the image of their natural and immemorial safeguard.

"Nor is this all the detriment we suffer. What *we* lose in authority and influence, France inevitably gains. This fact cannot but force itself on the minds of foreign statesmen. It is impossible but what they should say to themselves, 'If England deserts us thus—if the first thought of England is to preserve her alliance with France, whose traditional and permanent object is to aggrandise herself by weakening her neighbours one after the other—then the aim of each of us should be to make the best terms we can with France; and since England will not aid us, we must act as if England did not exist; for England cannot hurt us—France can.'

"Thus Russia, though equally opposed by France and England, is now far more cordial to France than to us. Thus even Austria accepts French rather than English mediation. And at this moment, throughout all the Germanic nations, I know not one in which we are not viewed with resentful mistrust, or which does not hear with a scornful smile of our own preparations against the danger for ourselves in which we have declined all sympathy with the fears of others.

"And this consideration brings before us another consequence of the French alliance, which although more familiar, is, unfortunately, still more startling.

"If for the sake of that alliance we had only lost our hold upon the confidence and respect of other Powers—if, in losing that confidence and that respect, we had only swelled to our own disadvantage the ascendant jurisdiction, I will not say of an hereditary enemy, but of an hereditary rival—if this were all, and if the counterbalancing advantages were those so sanguinely

anticipated at the commencement of the alliance, then we might perhaps rest contented with the sacrifices that accompany our new position in Europe.

"But that is not the case. The advantages promised were twofold: first, to Europe; next, to ourselves. But both were comprised in one sentence: THE SECURITY OF PEACE. It was supposed that, if France and England were thus amicably allied, Europe might see in that alliance the guarantee for her repose; that nations would no longer exhaust their resources by great standing armies; and that the arts of industry would tranquilly improve under the united standards of two Powers that, when separate, vied with each other which should most civilise the globe. This blessing to all Europe would be also the special reward of England. England need henceforth fear no invader. England, having laid aside all rivalry with her great Continental neighbour, would be left to the undisturbed luxury of diminishing her taxes and economising her expenditure.

"Have these promises been kept? Is not all Europe bristling with soldiers? Are not all foreign nations crippling their finances, and impeding their social progress, by maintaining armies beyond their strength? Is not England rousing her population from one end of the country to the other, drilling her youth into rifle corps and volunteers, doubling her navy, and calling upon her Parliament, not to cut down, but to increase her military expenditure?

"And this, in spite of the French alliance——no, not in spite, but on account of it!

"Were we restored to our normal position in Europe —not that of hostility to France, but in close connection with all the Powers by whom France is most dreaded—

standing, not as the enemy of France, but as apart from her, in the attitude of manly, frank, acknowledged vigilance,—would all Europe be half so alarmed as it now is? Should we ourselves be half so near a quarrel with France as we now are,—thanks to an alliance which presents at every moment a thousand points of angry contact in national jealousy and ancestral pride?

"Before the close of the Crimean war, every wise observer felt that French and English soldiers could not long fight side by side—that the laurels achieved could not be divided if *we* had had the capture of the Malakoff, and the French had known the disaster of the Redan. I believe that, in such a case, the French would never have rested till they had obtained revenge on the better fortune of their fellow-soldiers."

It must not be supposed that the foregoing reflections were influenced by any national antipathy to the French people, or any personal animosity to their sovereign. In point of fact, my father was one of the earliest English friends of the late Emperor of the French, and probably the first Englishman of any eminence who detected in the character of that prince qualities not generally recognised till they were, perhaps, generally overrated. In the year 1839 he wrote on the fly-leaf of a copy of the '*Idées napoléoniennes*,' given to him by the author of that book, the following prophetic criticism:

"The book of a very able mind; with few ideas, but those ideas bold, large, and reducible to vigorous action. Very much depreciated at this day by the critics of a drawing-room, Prince Louis Napoleon has qualities that may render him a remarkable man if he ever returns to

France. Dogged, daring, yet somewhat reserved and close, he can conceive with secrecy and act with promptitude. His faults would come from conceit and rashness; but akin with those characteristics are will and enthusiasm. He has these in a high degree. Above all, he has that intense faith in his own destiny, *with* which men rarely fail of achieving something great; *without* which all talent wants the *mens divinior*.—1839."

By an intimacy, moreover, which nearly resulted in a matrimonial alliance with one of the oldest families in France, my father, whilst yet a very young man, had been admitted into the home life of a people whose great domestic virtues and affections are strangely misrepresented in their popular literature, and very inadequately recognised by their foreign critics. In the fine and chivalrous character of that great people, in their sensitive sentiment of national and personal honour, in their capacity of enthusiasm for abstract ideas, their grace, their wit, their amiability, he felt throughout life the liveliest and most appreciative sympathy. His objection, therefore, even to the *simulacrum* of an exclusive alliance with Imperial France (whether well or ill founded), was entirely free from personal or national prejudice. There is an old English comedy, in which the chief personage is a worthy city merchant who has married a young wife. To this young wife a French adventurer, a man of doubtful antecedents, makes love. The husband, secretly alarmed for the safety of his domestic hearth, is persuaded that his best policy will be never to lose sight of the fascinating foreigner, for whom he therefore professes the most extravagant friendship, and by whom he is led into company and circumstances which alienate from him the confidence of his neighbours and the

esteem of his old friends, without securing his domestic repose. It was some such result as this that my father apprehended from a complete reversal of the position which England had hitherto occupied in relation to the great Powers of the Continent. The readers of this memorandum, however, need hardly be reminded of the date at which it was written, and the events which have since then materially modified the political geography of Europe. The virtual dissolution of the French alliance has left England at the present moment without any acknowledged alliance at all; and her statesmen of all parties appear to be generally of opinion that this position is the best and safest for her permanent interests, as well as most conducive to the peace of Europe. That opinion I presume not to discuss. Apart from her colonial empire, which certainly needs no defensive alliance, England has only two material interests beyond her own shores. One of them is to prevent those shores from being overshadowed by the establishment of any great naval Power on the nearest Continental seaboard. The other is to prevent whatever might menace the security of, or interrupt the access to, her Indian dominion. These objects may, perhaps, be best attained, and the peace of Europe may be most efficiently promoted, by England's complete abstention from all Continental alliances. But such a position is certainly not imposed upon her as a necessity by the smallness of her military force. Her true force is, as it has ever been, the force in which every great Continental Power is comparatively deficient; and whether as the head of a group of States, or as the acknowledged ally of any great military Power (in the defence of whose interests she might seek an additional security for her own), England has still two

mighty weights to throw into the balance of Fortune—her navy and her purse.

The Treaty of Paris of 1856 (of which nothing now remains beyond the obligation of England to forego in any future naval war her exercise of one of the barbarous but effective privileges hitherto asserted by maritime belligerents) was the sole achievement of the Anglo-French alliance.

My father, though on more than one occasion he disputed the wisdom of that war with Russia which occasioned the alliance, was, nevertheless, one of those who most ardently advocated the vigorous prosecution of it when once begun.

The 'Press' (a journal now extinct) was at this time commonly regarded as the organ of the Conservative party. The language of that journal in reference to the war then going on appeared to aim at the logical refinement of a pacific policy, too fantastic to gain support even from the peace party, whilst it greatly discouraged the martial fervour of the country. I have every reason to believe that this tone was not inspired by the chiefs of the Conservative party, and it certainly did not reflect the general sentiment of the party itself. But there were those who held that the Parliamentary function of an Opposition is to oppose the policy of the Government, whatever that policy may be; and that it was therefore difficult, if not impossible, for the Conservative party, as an opposition, to support with ardour the prosecution of a war conducted by a Whig Cabinet. To combat this theory, my father addressed to one of his intimate Conservative friends a private letter, from which the following extracts have been selected, because of the earnestness with which they give expression to opinions and senti-

ments extremely characteristic of his habitual tone of mind.

"These articles [in the 'Press'] represent a school of thinking—not a great party. Pardon me, my dear friend, if I cannot attach the weight you seem to accord to any suggestion that the party which Disraeli so gallantly led through the last session shrank, or was supposed to shrink, from the responsibility of conducting the war.

"Certainly I never so considered it, or I could not have supported that party. And certainly that was not the tone we took after Lord Derby declined to accept office. * * * Unquestionably, the vast majority of the country had no such suspicion until these articles in the 'Press' fastened upon Palmerston the reputation of being now the only representative of the martial sentiment that pervades the population. Now, as to your theory that an Opposition must have a policy; and that if it represents the policy of the Ministry, it ceases to be an Opposition.

"With all deference to your views, I think this theory may be pushed too far. The greatest good fortune that can befall an Opposition is, when it heartily and vigorously goes with the sense of the country, and has before it a Ministry that affects to do the same, but is so weak that it could not stand but for a disbelief in the possibility of forming any other Ministry which would espouse the same principles. Convince the country that the Opposition could form such a Ministry, and it must inevitably replace a Government so feeble as the one now in office. It will do so, moreover, with this advantage:

that the supporters of the present Administration could scarcely, with any effect, oppose a Cabinet called in to give more life to their own policy. Our Liberals would not let them do so. My view is—not to oppose Palmerston himself, but to expose the grave defects in the conduct of the war by the Cabinet generally, and not to leave him the monopoly of the war-cry at a dissolution. * * * Stick to the country, and the country will carry you through. The proper position to take is not that of Fox against the French war, (see what it did for his party!) but Pitt's position *versus* Addington. * * * I am also of opinion that the country will never take peace from a peace party. A war party alone can give peace. But that war party should have, what Palmerston has not, a definite arrangement with France as to the terms to be accepted, no matter what be the successes of the war. Such a party will beware of leading the people to expect from it a peace that cannot be obtained. It matters little to England whether we be somewhat less hard than we might be upon Russia as to her concessions (once granted that Turkish independence be firmly secured), but it matters everything to England that her prestige in conducting the war should be restored. I see more reasons for peace, since I have been in France, than the peace party put forward, or than it would be wise to state publicly at present. But I see in all such reasons additional arguments for throwing our whole soul into the war, in order to conquer peace, and not merely to creep out of the conflict, leaving behind it such a sense of our incapacity as would be certain to plunge us, ere long, into a war far more terrible. These are my views hastily thrown out. * * *. Believe me, it is no cant or humbug when I

add that I feel so uneasy and so alarmed for England. I think it requires such judgment and such vigour to get her out of these difficulties with credit, and I think timidity and half measures would be so fatal, that I would rather go out of Parliament altogether than belie my conscience as to the right course for us to take. I am quite sure that a hearty sympathy with the honour of the country throughout the quarrel it is now engaged in, without reference to the persons for the moment in power, will best serve the true interests of the party, for the people will understand it by an instinct; just as, no matter what may be the ability and skill employed in clipping and piecing together peace policies for the moment, the people will see through it all in their rough way; and those who attempt the task will find themselves confounded with the various damaged reputations from which England will never consent to accept a Cabinet, either for carrying on the war or for negotiating the peace."

The sentiments thus expressed dictated another letter on the same subject to a neighbouring proprietor and friend. This second letter extends the point of view established in the first, and I therefore print it here as an illustration of the spirit by which he was animated in advocating the vigorous prosecution of the war of 1855, although many of his suggestions for promoting the object he had at heart appear to me to have been impracticable. I cannot but think that to abandon the established principle and recast the entire structure of the English army during the operations of a great war would have been a perilous experiment. We have not found the change recommended

in this letter to be either so simple a matter or so beneficent in its effect upon the spirit of our army, even when carried out with great deliberation by an all-powerful Government in a time of undisturbed peace. The suggestion that England should furnish only a military, and France a naval contingent—the former under the orders of a French general, the latter under the orders of an English admiral—is rather ironical than serious. But I believe that a similar proposal was seriously made by the French Emperor to Lord Palmerston at the time when the English press was most loudly deploring the breakdown of our commissariat in the Crimea. Lord Palmerston declined that proposal on the obvious ground that the war was inevitably a military, not a naval war, and that the laurels of the war could only be gathered by the land forces. In point of fact, moreover, the deficiencies of our commissariat were put to rights long before the war was over; and when the war did at last come to an end somewhat sooner than the public opinion of England desired, we had in the Crimea an excellent little army in perfect working order, whilst the military resources of France were in a condition that certainly did not diminish the desire of her Government for a speedy peace. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Lord Palmerston's prudent and patriotic rejection of any such arrangement for securing an undivided command by sea and land, necessarily left France in possession of the nucleus of an increased naval power, occasioned by the necessity in which she then found herself of rapidly building transport-ships; and that this nucleus her Government was compelled, by the pressure of a very legitimate public opinion, to develop to an extent which greatly increased the naval estimates

of English Cabinets, without increasing their confidence in an ally who, before the conference of 1856 was over, appeared more anxious to secure the future friendship of Russia than to retain the continued co-operation of England.

Letter on the War to Delme Radcliffe, Esq.

1855.

"My dear Radcliffe,—I thank you cordially for your letter, and the compliment implied by the questions it contains. It is to the credit of those who are considered the special advocates of peace, that, at every risk of popularity, they have spoken out their honest sentiments; just as fearlessly I speak out mine. It is no use, now, inquiring if the war could have been prevented: the question is, being in it, what we are to do. It is no use dwelling on past blunders: the question is, how blunders in the past can serve as lessons for the future. Join with me in smiling at the timidity of those who make a catalogue of our errors and disasters, in order to infer that, because we have begun by failures, we must necessarily continue to fail. Did you ever know an Englishman of superior intellect and perseverance who failed, in the long-run, in anything on which he thoroughly set his heart? He may fail once, twice, thrice—he must succeed at the last. What is one Englishman to the English nation? What his single intellect and perseverance to the combined intellect and perseverance of millions? England is sure to come right at the end, by the inevitable law of her surpassing civilisation; provided only that they who direct her

counsels and wield her powers are as thoroughly determined to succeed as you and I would be in any manly enterprise to which our honour was committed. And should we not be determined the more if we had previous failures to redeem?

"But it does not suffice to be in earnest 'for the vigorous prosecution of the war;' that phrase has become a commonplace jargon. We must be also in earnest to reconstruct the machinery of the war upon sound principles, and grapple boldly with every prejudice and every obstacle in the way of improvement. We are said not to be a military nation. Let me here distinguish. We are a warlike people—high-spirited and dauntless; but we are not organised as a military community. We have not a science in war commensurate with our valour, nor equal to the culture of our intelligence in the arts of peace. What then! Can we not learn? Let us look to the systems in force among military nations, not servilely to borrow, but wisely to adapt to our social forms and habits, whatever military nations consider essential to military organisation. If, then, we would render our ability in the management of armies as cheerfully acknowledged as is our courage in the field, the first two requisites are these: facilities for professional instruction, and an unobstructed career to professional merit. It is not enough to demand from young officers on entering the army the shallow *cram* of a holiday examination. Education, with a view to the military profession, should be PROVIDED for them. There should be great military schools on a very different footing from that of Sandhurst—schools similar to the Polytechnique at Paris, and the Royal Military Academy at Turin—from which the great staple of our

officers should be drawn, and, of course, without purchase. Root and branch the system of purchase should be destroyed. It is a taint in the very fountain of honour—it is an outrage on common-sense. The present barrier to progressive advancement between non-commissioned and commissioned officers should be broken down. Every man who by bravery, steadiness, and trustworthy qualities, has worked his way from the ranks to the highest grade now vouchsafed to him, should pass by the established rule of promotion to the step of lieutenant. It might be a mockery, I grant, to class him with boys as an ensign. You might indeed require from him, if you pleased, in sending him to mix with gentlemen, to prove by an examination that he possesses the average degree of their education. Every colonel should, as in France, make to the War Office a quarterly report of the conduct and ability of all his officers, so that each officer, from a corporal upwards, should feel that he is under the eye of those who can advance his career according to his deserts. As a corollary from the principle of open competition to merit, the absurd expense of the mess-room should be curtailed. It can be to the interest of none, that a lad, with perhaps £200 a-year, should pay more for his dinner and his wine than a man of large fortune, who does not set up for an epicure, would dream of paying for his own if he dined at a club. Every officer should have it in his power to live upon his pay. In one word, the army should have the same fair-play for emulation and energy as any other profession. What would become of the law, if a man who had never read Blackstone could purchase his way to the Bench?

"I know the objections made to these changes. I have

examined them with care, and am convinced they are futile. But it may be said that even if such reforms be expedient, they would be slow in effect. Not so. Put your army on a right system, and I am convinced that the very announcement of your intentions would be electrical. The results would be instantaneously visible in the ambition of young officers, and in the inducements to grown men of a higher class to enlist as soldiers. You call this a people's war. Make it a people's army. Rely upon it, gentlemen will be no losers. Gentlemen have no cause to fear fair competition in courage, instruction, sense of honour, with men born below them. But at present the best-born gentleman in England has no chance against the son of his tailor, if the last has more money to buy his promotion.

"You may say that for the army in the Crimea purchase is suspended now. True, but it is only suspended. And the prospect of its return would still operate against securing to a profession, in which ability does not suffice for advancement, the same amount of educated talent as is devoted to callings in which educated talent is more assured of its rise.

"Besides, if the constitution of the army be once rendered wisely popular, the interest of the people will guard our establishments, however reduced on the return of peace, from the parsimony and neglect of former times. And I own to you that, looking to the state of public opinion on the Continent, I consider it less important to the ultimate destinies of England to triumph in the Crimea by the aid of France, than to establish and bequeath, when the war is over, the incontestable repute that her military efficiency is as for-

midable as her national courage. Success may end this war—reputation alone can preserve from others.

"So much for the reconstruction of our army. Have we nothing to improve in our mode of providing for it? I cheerfully acknowledge all that has been done to better our commissariat. But from what I see in public and hear in private, we are still far short of the mark. Here there is an immense field for capitalists; have capitalists been sufficiently called in? Has the system of penal contracts been adequately tried? Is it by penal contract that insufficient and crazy huts are again drifting their tardy way to Balaklava? It seems to me as a plain man, that if I said to a wealthy speculator, 'I must have such and such articles, warranted of the best quality, in such a place, and on such a day; handsome profits if you fulfil your contract, ruinous penalties if you fail,' I should have no lack of competitors, and hear small complaint of the goods. At all events, we English habitually possess great skill in the management of money and the transaction of business. We are willing to pay for this war whatever we are told is necessary. But we require that the skill we possess as a people should be fairly represented in the distribution of the funds we devote to the defence of our children.

"Again, hideous tales of the drunkenness of our soldiers are told to us. I have little faith in the effect of barbarous punishments—little more faith in the effect of moral counteractives, such as savings banks, &c. Young soldiers do not think of the future. But I have ample faith in the power of a commander-in-chief to banish the temptations. I have faith in the power of any man fit to sway numbers, to enforce the laws

necessary to their control and their safety, partly by wise precautions, partly by appeals to generous emotions. It is much more difficult to cure an individual of a besetting sin, than to extirpate an evil habit from banded multitudes. I daresay I might preach to the winds if I tried to reform an individual drunkard; but if you put 50,000 men addicted to drink under my absolute authority, I would forfeit my life if I did not make them habitually sober before the end of a month. Have we a drunken army? Can those noble soldiers of whom we are all so proud, sink from the heroes we venerate into the sots we must depise? Impossible—I will not believe it. But if so, make your commander-in-chief responsible. And till your army is sober, be sure that the right commander is not found.

"Next, as to the amount of our forces in the Crimea. Look to it. Is it commensurate with the population, the wealth, and the dignity of England? Mr Cobden here is right. Certainly it is not. If France has 170,000 soldiers in the field, and England has about 35,000, out of whom there are perhaps 22,000 effective bayonets, is that a proportion which justifies the phrase of the 'Allied Armies'? Of course it is not expected that we can have a number equal to the French; but we ought, at least, to have half as many. We have but the force of a contingent, with all the responsibilities of an army. And England expects to claim, in the conduct and in the glory of this war, a share equal to that of a power which arms and risks five times the amount of her force! This is preposterous. We are committing the national renown to such odds as no man in his senses would take at the Derby. For our national renown is not more engaged in defeating the enemy, by the help of the

French, than it is in maintaining our rank in the estimation of all the Powers that share, and all the Powers that gaze upon, the contest. We have all heard that 'England cannot afford to have a little war.' Let me hazard this addition to that immortal aphorism,—England, when at war, cannot afford to have a little success.

"But our generals do not want more soldiers? They say they would rather be without them? Yes, without such boys as we send forth, untrained, unseasoned, and almost undrilled. This touches our mode of recruiting. I will advert to that presently. But we have an option before us. Let us face it manfully. If it be really true that we cannot get sufficient recruits of a suitable kind, cannot have an army adequate to our pretensions, let our Government tell us so fairly; and let us then be content to become *bonâ fide* a contingent. Pick out the best and most seasoned men we possess—men whose steadiness and discipline will be sure to do us credit—and place them openly and at once under a French commander-in-chief, to be conducted by a French strategy, and provided for by a French commissariat. Thus, at all events, we escape a responsibility which we have not the means to discharge. And meanwhile we can be preparing ourselves to collect and to train a force worthy of our nation, in case the war should continue, and we should deem it necessary to resume an independent action. Our navy, our national arm, would remain in our own hands; and in return, France might consent still, as she would have consented at first, to contribute to that navy her contingent, to be under our admiral, and supplied by our commissariat. But does the idea of sinking in name to what we are in substance—a subordinate auxiliary in the field—gall the pride of the coun-

try too much? Well, then, let the country take it up. And my belief is that the country would, if the truth were fairly told to it; if it were not misled by assurances that recruits come faster than we want them; that so mighty an array never left these shores; that we have now 50,000 effective soldiers in the field; that next spring we shall have 70,000; that we have nothing to do but to pay our taxes, and (borrowing Lord Chatham's saying) 'trust to vernal promises for equinoctial disappointments.' If these boasts of our force, and its means of fresh supply, be well grounded, then the Government must submit to the undivided responsibility such assurances entail. If not—again I say, I believe that the country would respond to a bold appeal to its manhood and metal. Not if you resorted to the enforced conscription, which has been menacingly suggested; but if you made the army such that a man of generous ambition saw his way to rise to the head, though he might enlist in the ranks. And for my part, if men are really wanted, and if the army be reconstituted somewhat in the way thus loosely outlined, I would ask leave to raise a regiment at my own expense (as in the last war my father did before me), though Heaven knows that few country gentlemen have less ready money to spare. I would come into our county of Hertford, and if in that county I did not rally round the Queen's standard, no beardless boys, no drunken boors, but such a body of picked men as an English general would be proud to welcome,—I would throw up the seat in Parliament it is now my boast to possess, and I would say, that a constituency which told me to support the war, and could not, when every recruit who enlisted might win his hold of a marshal's baton, find a regiment to face the enemy, were

not worthy to be represented by a man of sincerity and spirit.

"Well, now, as to terms of peace. It is my belief—shall I startle you if I say it?—that between those most thoughtfully bent upon peace and those most resolute for concluding the war, there is less essential difference than there seems at first. Both have an interest against dawdlers and dissemblers—against those who talk war, and, by not acting it efficiently, delay peace. For, with men of this temper, the terms to be demanded are ever shifting and changing, just as a despatch reports a victory or avows a disaster. I think that any Government, no matter how warlike, must ever have the aim of peace upon definite and practical terms steadfastly before it. But I think also that it is not for us, the independent members of Parliament, to enfeeble the executive to which we commit our quarrel, by assuring the enemy of our anxiety to make it up. I am sorry to confess that in my younger days, before duelling was so much out of fashion, I was engaged in one or two 'affairs of honour,' as the phrase goes; and if when, as a second, I was meditating how to settle a difference upon terms most propitious to my principal's honour and repute, my principal himself had called out, in the hearing of the adversary,—'Ugly affair! awkward customer! Dead shot, too, I hear! Besides, fighting is so wicked! Get me out of the scrape as fast as you can!'—I fear that the proffered terms of conciliation would have been so scurvy, that my friend, in accepting them, must not only have lost caste with his equals, but incurred the risk of affront from every bully he met in his walks. Unquestionably I consider that the English Ministers should (if they have not done so already) privately, but distinctly,

settle with our allies, the broad bases upon which peace is possible, no matter what our successes may be. Otherwise, if successes increase, the interests of ambition may gradually replace the cause of humanity; and new objects may arise upon which England and France could not possibly agree. I do not say what should constitute those bases; nor have we a right to ask our Government publicly to state them. Nay, how can we presume to say we must have this or that, without the slightest reference to the opinions of an ally risking forces so disproportionably large, and honouring us hitherto with courtesies so chivalrous? In justice to any Government, now or hereafter, we must remember that it is not for England alone to determine what terms of peace the conquerors of Sebastopol should accept.

"But it is said, 'Only let Russia know that her overtures will not be met with affront.' Heaven forbid that they should be! By all means let the overtures come. Instead of pressing us to sue for peace, or intrigue for peace (I know not which), would that those eminent men, whose words will have weight with our enemy, would address their pacific adjurations to Russia! Away with the idea that overtures must commence with us! —away with it, because impracticable. Reflect on the present temper of our people. Could any Cabinet at this moment be constructed which could initiate proposals for peace as lenient as those which might be accepted if frankly volunteered to us? Away with Austrian and Prussian mediation! Let Russia herself appeal to the Western Powers—appeal to them as becomes a State that, despite its reverses, has shown the bravery which all brave men can respect. And if her proposals be but rational—do but concede by treaty half what we have

already won by the arms that have swept the Russian flag from the Euxine and Azoff, and vindicated the Ottoman cause on every battle-field from Alma to Kars—where is the man so in love with carnage, so covetous of revenge, as to withhold from such proposals his most favourable attention? I at least will say thus much now, that none may charge me with inconsistency hereafter. Ardent as I am to carry on this war, till Russia concedes what I hold to be the end for which the war began; convinced though I be, that upon that point all timidity, all wavering, would entail more fatal consequences upon our position and our safety than I deem it even prudent to foreshadow; yet the moment Russia herself proposes a peace upon terms that my conscience and reason tell me this country should accept, no consideration whether those terms were popular or not, whether they were advocated by this party or denounced by that, should induce me to abet my countrymen in the profitless expenditure of human life.

"But this is not the question before us. All that we now publicly know is, that Russia is not suggesting negotiations, but levying armaments—all that in private is whispered into our ears, is that Russia indeed may condescend to treat, but with such reservations as would plunge us again into the Serbonian bog of the Third Article, ignore all the successes we have purchased with the blood of our heroes, and still guard the couch of the 'sick man' by an eye that prognosticates his decease, and a hand that greeds for his property. Without such reservations (and can we admit them?) Russia is resolved to fight, and all we have to do is to fight and to beat her. Beat her! We are solemnly told that that would be a great misfortune. We are met by lugubrious

anticipations of victories too triumphant. We shall gain the Crimea, and not know what to do with it! So that it would seem that all our aim in going to war, should be not to conquer, but to get conveniently conquered; for while we conquer, Russia will be too proud to hear of peace, and what we conquer will be a sad embarrassment to our statesmen. These are prospects that need not daunt us. War, when decisive, has a quick and practical philosophy of its own, and the difficulties that seem largest in its progress, usually vanish at its close. But 'venture upon another campaign, and Heaven knows how long bloodshed will last!—what new elements of strife must arise!—to what distant lands the battle-field must extend!' These are mere words. If Russia will really not give peace until her power is exhausted, doubtless there is no alternative but to exhaust her power. For my part, I think another campaign will go far to do so. That is a matter of conjecture. But though we may dispute as to the length of time it may take, we are all pretty well agreed that her ultimate exhaustion can only be prevented by the slackening of our own energies. Well, when she is exhausted, and inclines to peace, we are asked, what then? 'What material guarantee for the future tranquillity of Europe can she concede? Will they more secure that object than those she would concede now?' That I cannot say, for I know not what she would now concede. But I do know that every month in which she protracts a struggle that consumes her vitals, she is giving us a material guarantee more effective than the surrender of a fort or the limitation of a fleet: she is giving us the guarantee of wasted finances, of tottering commerce, and of lands robbed of their labourers, for the safety of her neighbours, and her adhe-

sion to future treaties. At the worst, then, let the formal parchments on which peace may be finally inscribed be ever so blurred by diplomatic blunders, we do in effect find a surety for Europe in everything that weakens the force of its aggressor. This must be our consolation to the degree in which the struggle is prolonged; and this consolation might well preserve us from exaggerated stringency in mere verbal provisions, even if we could dictate our terms on the banks of the Neva.

"From what I have thus said, my dear Radcliffe, you may gather my views as to the policy which, in my humble judgment, it becomes us to adopt in the approaching session of Parliament. I speak only for myself. I pretend to no influence with others. That great party which commands my gratitude for the kindness with which it has received me since my return to public life, is led in the House of Commons by a man whose genius is known to all—whose many gallant and generous, many winning and cordial qualities, are perhaps better known to me than to most. We began life together as warm friends; and though then differing in politics, we established in literature that fellowship of toil and hope in which companions without envy (a vice not admitted into his temper, and I think not congenial to my own) learn that better, and, if I may use the expression, that more ideal part in each other, on which amidst the feuds of party the light only falls in glimpses. I am convinced that, though of a broad and liberal nature, and inclined, as in the year 1855 every wise Conservative should be, to widen to all new-comers the area on which Conservatism takes its ground, the brilliant leader I speak of is no less loyal to his friends than formidable to his opponents. And whatever course he and Lord Derby may

adopt, will, I doubt not, be worthy the eminence of their names and the gravity of the time. But I speak plainly my own conviction, that there never was a period in which a party comprising men who boast so large a stake in the country should more carefully distinguish its policy and acts from the character of faction. In moments of national peril we should merge all selfish objects in one unmistakable desire to consult the national security and honour. A party in which the people can discover this elevated sympathy with their genuine interests need not hunt after converts. Converts will volunteer. Does it want numbers?—constituencies will give them. Does it want orators?—a few manly sentiments, however artlessly spoken, will be oratory enough with an audience that feels our ambition is to be true to our country. Out of office or in it, let us have but this one thought: England is in difficulty and danger, and, by God's help, we will carry her through both in triumph, with cool English heads and stout English hearts.—I am, my dear Radcliffe, yours, &c., EDWARD BULWER LYTTON."

"KNEBWORTH, *Nov.* 12, 1855."

Not the least lamentable illustration of the sterility and hollowness of our alliance with Imperial France, is to be found in the attitude to which we were reduced during the Danish war, as well as in the fact of that war itself, which, though it was opposed to the wishes of both France and England, the Anglo-French alliance wholly failed to prevent. Upon this subject, I find amongst my father's papers some reflections (probably jotted down as notes for a speech never spoken) which appear to me both interesting and instructive; because they refer to the

whole question from a point of view which was not adopted at the time by any party or speaker in Parliament, and still less by the English press,—a point of view, indeed, which in all probability is not yet sufficiently, if at all, apprehended by our public, to whom the circumstances of that war (however painful they may be to remember) can still suggest wholesome lessons for the guidance of opinion in reference to future Continental questions.

Notes upon the Danish War.

"Cause of Denmark championed by England. Denmark abandoned. Why is it that of all the European Powers who signed the Treaty of 1852, England alone has been held up to contumely and reproach by both the contending parties? How is it that she alone sees called into question her good faith, her courage, her honour?

"Because she is the Power that most interfered, most invited responsibility.

"Why? Because she had a greater interest in the quarrel than other neutral Powers? Certainly not. Lord Russell to Sir A. Buchanan, 13th November 1863: 'Her Majesty's Government have no immediate interest in this question; their interest is bound up with the general interests of Europe.' But the fact is, our interest was not only not greater, it was obviously *less* than that of other European Powers. France and Russia. Denmark, ally of France, not of England, in old French war. In event of any new war, France, if opposed to England, would by her traditional policy look, and reasonably, for aid to Scandinavian fleets, not German armies. Russia's interest, strong and conspicuous, to preserve Denmark an

integral State distinct from Sweden. For whatever tends to make Denmark too small for independent monarchy, tends to create, soon or late, Scandinavian empire. Duty of English Minister, therefore, not to commit national honour of England beyond interests of England; and English interests less than those of France and Russia. But England had an interest in sanctity of Treaty of 1852? Yes; an interest, but not a paramount interest. Powers most directly interested in sanctity of treaties, Prussia and Austria. Without treaties, King of Prussia might still be Elector of Brandenburg, and Emperor of Austria little more than Austrian Archduke who lost original patrimony of great ancestor, which happened to be in Switzerland. Without treaties, England might lose a few small places, but would still hold an empire comprising that India which Alexander could not conquer, and that Australasia which Columbus did not discover.

"Four years ago, any practical politician must have foreseen consequence of such interference.

"Petition of Slesvig Diet for redress of grievances. Indignant sympathy excited by it throughout Germany immediately reported by all our diplomatic Ministers in Germany.

"To understand almost fanatical passion of every German State on this subject, remember popular sentiment of Germany was opposed to Treaty of 1852, and only appeased by assurances of Austria and Prussia to Diet that they guaranteed fulfilment of Danish obligations, including admission of Germans in the duchies to equal rights—a point on which German sentiment could not but be sensitively tenacious. In 1860, therefore, it became clear that, unless the Slesvig grievances were

fully redressed, German excitement would sooner or later bring German armies not only into Holstein as a member of the Confederation, but also upon Slesvig, on the ground that non-fulfilment of Danish obligations cancelled Danish advantages secured by Treaty of 1852, annulled that Treaty, and constituted a *casus belli*.

"But could Denmark remove those grievances? Danish Minister, M. Hall, frankly said No. Some of them, indeed, were mitigated at request of England; but enough left to vitiate concessions accorded. Children not compelled to receive confirmation in Danish language, but required to be examined in Danish before confirmation. Sir A. Paget states, concessions made cannot satisfy complaints of Slesvig, and that nothing more can be expected from Danish Government.

"*N.B.* — Candour, intelligence, ability, truth, and honour of Paget's despatches cannot be too highly praised.

"Here, then, so far back as 1860, was a safe and honourable escape. English Government asks Denmark to redress grievances which it thinks just. Denmark does not, cannot do so, to satisfaction of English Government. This being so, it is clear that Germany will move soon or late. English Government has only to explain cause of quarrel to English Parliament, and say, 'We have withdrawn from all individual interference till Denmark—weak compared to Germany, but strong compared to Slesvig — has redressed grievances which, if not redressed, may lead to war. And we cannot commit English honour to a cause that may demand all your resources of blood and treasure against Powers that comprise all your hereditary Continental alliances, if ever France attacks you, unless the friend you are to serve

first puts himself thoroughly in the right. He cannot put himself thoroughly in the right in English eyes unless he govern the State annexed to his sovereignty in accordance with those principles of justice which he recognises in the government of his own special domain.'

"But now recognise the excuse of that brave and noble Denmark for her government of Slesvig. It is the excuse of necessity. Anomalous position of duchies. Both had been in revolt against her; both assisted by German arms; both restored by Treaty of 1852, on two main conditions, — 1st, not to isolate Holstein from Slesvig and Denmark proper—2d, not to incorporate, or take any step tending to incorporate, Slesvig as provincial part and parcel of the Danish monarchy. Experience soon proved Danish Government could not literally and rigidly fulfil these conditions.

"Denmark nominally a monarchy; virtually a democracy under monarchical forms. And if there ever was an ancient people fit for that democracy, which is the life-blood of young races, like colonies, it is the Danes. Wide diffusion and high standard of education. Poverty almost unknown. Pressure of population on rewards of labour corrected by habitual emigration. Wealthy classes no political influence by their wealth. People industrious, brave. How is it, then, that a nation so free, so intelligent, and, as this war has shown, so chivalrously humane, not only administered Slesvig on principles which they would resent if applied to themselves, but also rendered it impossible for any Danish Government to stand if it adopted those suggestions of conciliatory policy which in 1860 Lord Russell tendered, as became the most illustrious inheritor of a name so dear to freedom, and yet tendered in vain?

"Reason is—Danish democracy, like that of all small States, intensely patriotic. But the Dane, patriotic not only as Dane but as Scandinavian; just as a Florentine is patriotic not only as Florentine but as Italian.

"Of the two duchies appended to the Danish crown, Holstein is a German soil, and almost purely German population. King only holds it as member of German Confederation. At Copenhagen, King of the Danes; in Holstein, feudatory of the German League. Thus, as Duke of Holstein, he subjects monarchy and people of Denmark to the interests, the ambition, and the control of a formidable foreign Power. Therefore the instinct of the Danes, ever since they had a free constitution, has been to isolate Holstein from Denmark. Instinct irresistible. Had I been a Dane I should have felt it, just as, being an Englishman, I would, in like circumstances, have isolated England from Hanover.

"But Slesvig, in Danish eyes, purely Scandinavian soil. Eider Scandinavian barrier since Charlemagne. Features of soil—village, hill, river—retain old Scandinavian names. Runic monuments of Danish ancestors by now ruined walls of Dannewerke.

"True that for centuries German immigrants have poured over boundary—form greater part of population up to some line it baffles diplomatists to distinguish, and are more or less diffused, not only throughout Slesvig, but Denmark itself.

"But Danish patriots consider these foreign settlers on Danish soil have no right to alienate soil itself from Denmark. [Danes allowed by King Alfred to occupy ten English counties (Sir F. Palgrave). Should we consider they thereby acquired a right to alienate those counties from the soil and destinies of Saxon England?].

Therefore political instinct tended to isolate Germanic Holstein—incorporate Scandinavian Slesvig. To effect this the means resorted to were rough, but not meanly or frivolously tyrannical. Danish liberty young; and the last thing liberty learns is the art of conciliation. Deep purpose under all the vexations of this policy. To de-Germanise, or, as Germans express it, Danify Slesvig; root out German language, and separate citizens of Scandinavian Slesvig from those of German Holstein;—in short, accomplish that which they did at last perilously adventure in Constitution of November, whereby, in bold defiance of Germany, they did (in opinion of English Government, though they do not own it themselves) 'merge individuality of Slesvig into a province of Danish kingdom.'

"Key to Danish policy, therefore. Popular instinct to isolate Holstein because it was foreign soil, and incorporate Slesvig because it was Danish soil.

"Hence impossibility (overlooked by English Government) of successful negotiation by insisting, on the one hand, that Denmark should rigidly fulfil engagements to which Danish democracy was so opposed that it would have destroyed any Government, and shaken any throne that adhered to them; and, on the other hand, calling upon Germany rigidly to respect a treaty which, in German eyes, was morally if not legally damaged by the non-fulfilment, for twelve long years, of those Danish engagements. The difficulty was so insuperable and so obvious, that no English Cabinet should have risked our peace and honour by meddling with it more than was done by other neutral Powers. For the moment the large image of England came on the scene, of course all smaller considerations would vanish—original cause of

quarrel be forgotten—no one care to inquire into petty squabbles between Slesvig and Denmark, but all the world exclaim, 'What will England do for the Power whose cause she espouses?'"

In the foregoing extracts I have somewhat anticipated dates, because this is the place in which such extracts can be given with least interruption to the outlines of this short sketch of my father's political life. But I will now close the series of them with an Essay on the Genius of Conservatism, printed from his unpublished manuscripts, and which may, I think, be fairly entitled "Considerations for all Parties."

THE GENIUS OF CONSERVATISM.

CHAPTER I.

*Origin of the word 'Conservative' as a Party Denomination.**

"In 1831 there was introduced into the English language a new barbarism—'Conservative'—passed from a pedantic adjective into a familiar noun. No one knows by whom it was first applied to a political signification. It was heard of one day, and the next it was the popular title of a party. In vain Sir Robert Peel strove to discountenance the neologism. 'I hate,' said he, in the House of Commons, 'that un-English name of Conservative, which we have heard lately.' The word triumphed over the man. A very short time afterwards Sir Robert Peel called himself a Conservative, and his party the Conservative Party. The first resistance and the subsequent adoption were alike characteristic of the

* This essay is undated; but I believe it to have been written about 1858.

mind which, doubting its own strength, invariably opposed innovation, until other men had accepted it. Sir Robert Peel submitted to the neologism, as he had done to the Corn-law repeal and Roman Catholic emancipation, with so good a grace, that his policy became identified with the word. To this day many believe that he originated its present signification; just as, abroad, many suppose that he originated Free Trade. To originate was not his forte.

"The word became thus popular and triumphant because it supplied a want. The members of a powerful party were without a distinct party name. By a very slight effort of the imagination the word Conservative conveyed an idea of the attributes they desired to claim, and of the new position in which circumstances had placed them. The word came at the right moment, and was at once received as the watch-cry and inscribed on the standard. Long previously to the appearance of this fortunate neologism, another stranger of foreign origin had been naturalised amongst us. The word Liberal, wrested from its plain English signification, and borrowing its sense from the factions of France, had become the generic title of a great proportion of the political population. Henceforth, then, these two substantives, replacing the elder dynasty of Whigs and Tories, have fought for mastery at elections, and decided the empire of Parliament.

"When we look back, we find that Necessity was indeed the mother of these inventions, and Liberal was naturally her elder-born.

"The Tories, under their own venerable title, were the paramount party of the State. They had conducted to a glorious issue a mighty war—they monopolised the power of legislation in the peace that succeeded—

they had the confidence of the sovereign— the prestige of lengthened authority—the fears of popular licence which the first French Revolution had bequeathed to the educated classes; and Parliament had adapted its boroughs to the accommodation of the politicians who had long been dispensers of the rewards of ambition. It was in vain to oppose to the moral power and numerical force of this great party the ancient antithesis of 'Whigs.' That title had become identified with the idea of a small minority; to the people it represented an aristocratic clique, which had never during the reign of George III. made itself national. With a kind of intellectual haughtiness, it had rather gone against the national prejudices. When most affecting popular principles, it had been rather French than English. It had welcomed the French Revolution; it had apologised for excesses which shook the foundation of property, and for crimes which had shocked the humanity so rooted in English habits of thought; it had grieved or cavilled at the success of British arms; it had sympathised in each triumph of the enemy; it had seemed indifferent to Protestantism when Roman Catholic emancipation was unpopular at the hustings; it had assailed the Constitution at a time when Parliamentary Reform was, even by the statesmen who afterwards effected it, connected with the most extravagant changes, and defended by the most Jacobin arguments. The Whigs were not a national party; they did not represent the national feeling; even Charles Fox himself is not at this day a popular name with the masses. They were regarded not as hearty soldiers in the popular cause, but as a discontented section of the aristocracy, which, in spite of its ability, was unsafe on account of its ambition.

"Yet there was a large mass of politicians who, if they did not sympathise with the Whigs, desired some bond of union against the Tories. Comprising various shades of opinion, they could not be denoted by any name then existing. All popular names, such as Friends of the People, had become discreditable and revolutionary. At this season there arrived from the Continent the word 'Liberal;' it had not the immediate vogue that attended the subsequent appearance of its eminent adversary Conservative; it was adopted at first only by an enthusiastic few, and rather to denote sympathy with foreign insurrection against despotism than adherence to any definite domestic policy. Gradually it was recognised by a wider circle: but its career was suddenly stopped; for a while it became dormant. Lord Grey introduced the Reform Bill; Reformers became the popular party word; no one talked of Liberals. Reform carried, there broke out a schism in the host that achieved the victory. The Whigs were the minority in the camp that divided the spoils; the vast majority were the Radicals, to whom nothing was assigned but the gratifying spectacle of the trophies. Reformers thus split into two divisions — the Whigs and the Radicals; the Whigs being those that naturally remained satisfied with a reform that gave them the monopoly of office—the Radicals being those who quite as naturally pushed onward to other reforms, that might compel the Whigs to open that monopoly to themselves.

"Afterwards came the cry of the Corn-laws—Reform was laid on the shelf—Radicals and Whigs compounded their distinctions and accepted the common appellation of Free-traders—a title which swelled their numbers by the admission of many respectable gentlemen who had been Tories from the cradle, but who, by accepting Free

Trade, became generally metamorphosed. But as Free Trade was virtually carried when Manchester prevailed over the country party, and as Free-trader was a name that would become very inconvenient after that date, since it would imply a rigid adoption of an impossible practice (Free Trade being still as remote from our laws as the millennium, continually approached, but indefinitely postponed, is from our social system), so, suddenly, the word 'Liberal' has been again taken up, furbished anew, in the service of a coalition which, appealing for support to all who call themselves 'Liberals,' embraces all diversities of politics, from the colleague of Castlereagh to the pupil of Bentham. Thus words owe their origin or their vogue to the want that their usage supplies.

"On the other hand, the Tories, well satisfied with their historical name, so long as that name rallied numbers around them, suddenly woke to find that the name which had been their tower of strength was converted into their pillory of shame. The desire of political enfranchisement had naturally grown up amongst the new communities of manufacturing towns. The desire was allowed to be just and natural by the country at large. The Duke of Wellington had granted Roman Catholic emancipation. When one party-cry is satisfied, another succeeds; when a Minister makes one popular concession, he is expected to follow it by another. All men expected that the Duke of Wellington would extend the franchise to the great towns not yet represented. He sturdily refused to do so; and having lost much support from the Tories by the enactment of Roman Catholic emancipation, he lost all chance of support from those who had favoured the Administration of Canning. His Government fell. Parliamentary Reform

became the rage of the day; approved by the sovereign, proposed by the executive, supported by many of the malcontent members of the aristocracy. It is no wonder that it seized hold of the people, and blended its image with all fantastic chimeras of national regeneration.

"The Tories, as a body, opposed Reform, and the people gave them the hateful title of anti-Reformers. The new Parliament once chosen, the Tories shrank into a small minority, as the result of the first election under the altered system. It was certainly not desirable to retain a name which no longer signified anything it had signified before. In the reign of George I. the more eminent of the Tories had been distinguished for their attachment to Parliamentary Reform. From the reign of George III. to that of William IV. they had been no less distinguished for their opposition to all popular plans for effecting this object. Parliamentary Reform disposed of, one salient historical feature of Toryism was effaced. Again, the Tories, from having in the reign of Anne been supposed not inimical to Papacy, had become the especial advocates of the Protestant establishment, and the most united body against all Popish claims; but Roman Catholic emancipation carried, another great bond of their union, and another great characteristic of their policy as Tories, were swept away. Thus the word Tory no longer denoted a fixed political theory, while the enemies of the party naturally sought to pin it to a position that had ceased to be tenable. With the usual unfair ingenuity of faction, the triumphant Reformers sought to identify their opponents with everything most hateful in the ancient system, and to represent them as hostile to every object of future hope. The corruption first introduced by Walpole, the archimandrite of the Whigs, was imputed

solely to Tory practices. Wars, cheered on by the populace, were the creations of Tory prejudice. Every abuse that time had sanctioned was laid to their door; to every reform that wisdom might suggest they were denounced as the inveterate obstacles.

"Men who shared the general principle of Tories declined to accept the name. 'I am for Sir Robert Peel,' quoth a merchant, 'but I am no Tory.' 'I go with Sir Edward Knatchbull,' said a squire, 'but I am no Tory.' Then appeared that opportune neologism 'Conservative.' And the moment it was adopted, the party widened in its range, increased in its influence, and continues at this day to constitute the largest single political section in the State. Nay, so much does the sense it has received embody the general sentiment of the country, that those opposed to the party that act under the appellation, still grasp at the appellation itself. In his last speech, before acceding to his present office, Mr Gladstone exclaims, 'I am a Conservative.' 'I am a Conservative,' says the Earl of Aberdeen. Even the word 'Liberal,' popular though it be, does not suffice for popularity unless it be flavoured from the principle it opposes in act, and flatters in theory. And the Cabinet that would by its new Reform Bill unsettle every base of the old Constitution, and by its Oaths Bill would strike from the Legislature the recognition of Christianity, still calls itself Liberal-Conservative. A word so much in the mouths of politicians must have taken deep root in the inclinations of the people. But the meaning of a word so contested and appropriated by opposite extremes should be fairly defined; or by attempting to mean too much it will soon fail to mean anything, and must fade from the language, as a circle, in widening, fades from the water. I propose, then, in the

following chapters, to examine the nature of Conservatism, its political objects and social influence.

CHAPTER II.

Meaning of the word 'Conservative' as a Political Principle.

"In every political society there are certain organic principles more or less peculiar to itself. If these principles be sapped, the society begins to decay; though the decay may be long unnoticed by the ordinary observer. If they be destroyed, the society itself will perish; it may be reconstructed in a new form, but its original identity is gone. The Roman Republic was not the same society as the Roman Empire.

The true Conservative policy is the conservation of these organic principles. It is not in itself either democratic or monarchical. It is one or the other, according as democracy or monarchy be the vital principle of the State in which it operates and exists. Conservatism would therefore be democratic in America, monarchical in England; but monarchical according to the form in which monarchy in this country has become tempered and admixed. It therefore differs essentially from the old spirit of Toryism, which inclined in the abstract towards the predominance of the kingly element, and abhorred popular government in itself, no matter in what country it was established by law, and interwoven with sentiment and custom. All that Conservatism regards is duration for the body politic. It is not averse to change—change may be healthful; but it is averse to that kind of change which tends to

disorganisation. Whatever there be most precious to the vitality of any particular State, becomes its jealous care. As but one thing is more precious to a State than liberty, so where liberty is established Conservatism is its stubborn guardian, and never yields the possession save for that which it is more essential to conserve. But liberty is diffused throughout a people by many varieties of constitution—the monarchical, the aristocratic, the democratic, or through nice and delicate combinations of each. Conservatism tends to the conservation of liberty in that form, and through those media, in which it has become most identified with the customs and character of the people governed. And if it seems at times opposed to the extension of freedom, it is not on the ground of extension, but from the fear that freedom may be risked or lost altogether by an incautious transfer of the trust. Conservatism would thus have sided with Brutus and the patrician party against Cæsar and the plebeian, because with the former was the last hope of Roman liberty. It is what we should now call the popular party—that is, the common people (headed by demagogues who, it is true, commanded armies)—that destroyed the Republic. In the empire of Augustus democracy erected its own splendid tomb. We have said that there is one thing in a State more essential to conserve than political liberty—it is social order. Hence, if liberty and order are forced into mortal conflict, and one must destroy the other, order prevails by the ultimate decree of numbers. Life may be safe, property secure, arts may flourish, commerce extend, under a Richelieu; not under that chaos of social elements in which Vergniauds and Marats, Dantons and Robespierres, struggle against each other. Despotism is often the

effort of nature to cure herself from a worse disease. Conservatism will thus, in certain crises of history, be found in union with the masses, when both, equally interested against anarchy, exchange political freedom for social order; as in physical diseases the physician encourages the effort of nature, which in more healthful bodies he would strive to cure or prevent. The recent elevation of Louis Napoleon to the throne of France is an instance of this compelled and melancholy league.

"And here, too, Conservatism in France was true to its hereditary attribute—viz., the conservation of those first principles of the State on which the national character has been formed. For the French are essentially by history and by temperament fitted to the government of a single executive authority—to the pomp which reflects the disposition of the nation from a height too remote for envy. They have been habituated to contemplate, through a long succession of imposing and brilliant kings, their own grandeur, in the majesty of a throne. They must be ashamed of a sovereign before they rebel against him; littleness in their monarch wounds their own *amour propre*. Regal authority in some form or other seems one of the necessary conditions of political society in France; and all attempts to do without it have been unsuccessful, because a violence to the national character. The policy, therefore, that coincided with the choice of millions, in substituting an emperor for a turbulent and jarring democracy, liable at every moment to dissolution, was indisputably Conservative; and the ruler selected was a more Conservative choice than would have been the heir of the Bourbons, because veneration for Napoleon and contempt for the Bourbons had, whether right or wrong, become ideas so fixed in the mind of the nation, that the

best chance for monarchy was with the one, and the worst chance with the other.

"But suppose that French politicians had at the same time abruptly sought to restore what Conservatives maintain in England—the principle of hereditary aristocracy,—they would have erred against the principle of Conservatism; for hereditary aristocracy is, perhaps unfortunately, the principle of all others with which the French character has no sympathy, and upon which the French people would at present refuse to reconstruct society. Aristocracy, in the proper political sense of the word, would be an innovation totally foreign, not only to the existent habits, but to the previous history, of the French. They have had a feudal nobility—they have never had a political aristocracy. For the word aristocracy includes the idea of government; and under their kings the nobles had no share in the government of the general State. Tyrants they might be in their petty fiefs, but they were ciphers in the corporate administration. They had no legislative chamber; they had *entrées* at court instead. After the wars of the Fronde, they were destitute even of political influence; they exercised a very small share in the administration of practical affairs. The Colberts and D'Aguisseaus were not found amongst the *noblesse d'epée*, the ancient vassals of the Crown. Observe, then, this distinction between nobility and aristocracy: Nobility is an idea inherent in France; it reappears whenever it has been formally abolished. In vain have titles been twice proscribed by law—society hastens to restore them. But titles are no symbols of legislative authority; in their political and social fabric the Corinthian columns may adorn the wings—they do not support the building. Aristocracy is foreign to the French.

"Conservatism, therefore, which is necessarily adherence to what actually exists, could not establish in France an aristocracy of which the foundations were wanting; its tendency has been to obtain the best available substitutes for it, as a barrier between autocracy and mob-rule. Hence its passion for military command, its long array of prefects and mayors, provincial and municipal authorities; its national guard at one time, its standing armies (so enlisted as to preserve a certain sympathy with civilians) at another. All these have been efforts to interpose something or other between the force of one and the force of many. But the want of a powerful and popular class of gentlemen, accustomed to public affairs, and obtaining rewards of ambition through influence over public opinion, based upon the solid foundation of transmitted and permanent property, and continually receiving new blood by accessories from the ranks of the people, is the paramount cause of insecurity to all forms of government established in France, and of the quick and violent changes from ochlocracy to despotism. The invention prompted by necessity has hitherto failed to find effective substitutes for the natural objects fulfilled by such a class; and until either the class be created *de novo*, or the substitute practically found, the essential guarantees for the maintenance of any established constitution will be wanting. Conservatism in France is thus driven to the choice of temporary expedients; it cannot attempt a heroic cure of the evils it deplores, there being an organic defect in the constitution of society; it can only deal in palliatives, which it varies from time to time, according as the disease shows itself in exhibiting new symptoms.

"Hence, perhaps, of all the nations of civilised Europe, France is that of which it is least possible to predicate the

future. A popular despot in all States is but a lucky accident. In France, when the despotism loses popularity, the system it embodies is sure to perish. A democratic republic, on the other hand, in all old States soon culminates into a dictatorship. Nothing in France interposes between the dictatorship and the democracy. Hitherto the astonishing natural resources of the country—depending little upon foreign trade—have enabled the material prosperity of France to recover from shocks upon capital and credit, the least of which would have destroyed for ever the more artificial greatness of England. And throughout all vicissitudes, the French have hitherto preserved one of the most vital elements of social duration—viz., a passionate love of country, and of all which can embellish and elevate their native land. As long as France retains its territorial integrity, one and indivisible, it is probable, therefore, that whatever the vices of its successive constitutions, it will keep its organisation together by its native strength and its nervous energy, although subjected from time to time to fierce disorders, infecting the civilised world by their own virulence. But France is liable sooner or later to that which is more fatal than such disorders — it is liable to subdivision, the death which comes from the dissolution of the parts. It narrowly escaped that fate in the first revolution; and it is at least probable that if the Allies had not been pledged to the restoration of the Bourbons, and therefore to the maintenance of an integral throne, the fall of Napoleon would have been followed by a dismemberment of his empire.

"The ultimate danger to France of dissolution, as the leading State of continental Europe, is twofold, arising from two causes always at work within the national

character. 1st, That rooted passion for equality which under all forms of government, accepted for the time, tends towards republican democracy; 2dly, that war-like and ambitious spirit, which, whatever the seeming change on the surface produced by the greater ascendancy of the *bourgeois* class, is still ready to ignite in the very core of the nation, and is kept inflammable by the laws of property itself, which in every rising generation throw loose upon the world a large number of well-born, well-educated men, with no vent for ambition and energy, save in the press which despotism stifles, or the army upon which despotism must depend.

"If republicanism could exist fifty years in France, at the end of fifty years Marseilles would be the capital of one commonwealth, Paris of another.

"If a military empire were compelled to maintain itself in power by perpetually administering to the popular desire of glory and conquest, all Europe would soon become enlisted by a common interest in destroying the power of France to molest its neighbours, a power that could only be destroyed by splitting up its dominions. These are the contingent perils to France as a body politic.

"On the other hand, with the increasing power of the trading classes, a new element of Conservatism is developing itself, and may, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, become the salvation of the State.

"The time for such combination seems at present far distant. It can only arrive when the habits of thought amongst the people bring naturally about the political revolution which converts habits into laws. No class can retain power without union, and without legislative

influence. To give union and legislative influence to the commercial class, it must become a recognised and represented order in the State.

"It is a question, therefore, whether a commercial aristocracy on a very extensive basis may not naturally grow out of the wants and conditions of French society, as it grew out of those of the Genoese. The French would not tolerate the creation of a feudal aristocracy; they would not repeal the laws that enforce testamentary subdivision of property for the sake of the ancient nobles. Possibly they might do so hereafter for the creation of an order to which they might all advance an equal claim; and the grave inconveniences and perils of a compulsory dispersion of capital, which must increase with the increase of population, may at length permit the man who has accumulated a fortune, the freedom to dispose of it as he pleases. Until then, not only the soil cannot produce a third of what it is capable of producing, but there can be no permanence in the capital of any commercial house. Territorial rights once lost are ever difficult to recover—commercial inconveniences are likely sooner or later to be repaired. A commercial aristocracy appears therefore to be the only form of intermediate authority left to France; and it cannot be created until the commercial body are fitted to claim, and the habits of the population prepared to accord it. No doubt such contingencies are remote and precarious, and to human foresight seem more dim and improbable than the evils which they would be calculated to meet.

CHAPTER III.

Elements of Conservatism in the English Commonwealth.

"We come now to apply Conservatism to Great Britain, the empire in which the principle is stronger, with the exception of the Swiss republics, than in all ancient communities, from the obvious reason that in Great Britain liberty and order are alike established, according to the habits of the people, on surer foundations and in a higher degree than in any other ancient political community, except that of the Swiss republics. In these republics Conservatism is so predominant that it is difficult to conceive any internal causes that could lead to the decay of the body politic. Of all commonwealths in Europe, the Swiss Federations present the greatest likelihood of durability, provided only that foreign force be not brought to bear against them.

"In examining the vital principles of the English State, the characteristic that will most strike an intelligent observer, is the prevalence of aristocracy. But it is an aristocracy very peculiar in practice, and realising to a considerable extent the ideal *αριστοκρατεια* of the Greeks. It is the government of the best, in the political sense of that superlative, in which property, birth, intellectual energy, and moral character have each their respective share. Aristocracy with us embraces nobility, but is yet distinct from it. Every provincial town, every rural village, has its aristocracy; though perhaps it cannot boast of a single person whom in our language we call noble. Nobility with us is extremely restricted:

aristocracy is ubiquitous. And it is noticeable that everywhere this aristocracy presents much the same combinations. In the rural district, in the manufacturing town, the men who are most influential, unite—if not individually, yet collectively as a class, and in similar averages—energy and character with property and station. Of course here, as in all communities, wealth alone is power; and a millowner employing several hundred hands, or a landed proprietor with a numerous tenantry, exercises a certain influence in right of that power which his capital bestows, whatever the grade of his intelligence or repute. But that power will be considerably augmented or diminished according to his individual capacities and merits. And many, very inferior to him in fortune, will exceed him in influence (that is, in the political ascendancy which is comprehended in the word aristocracy) if his fortune be his sole title to respect. A tyrannical millowner, an unpopular landlord, will often indeed injure the political party that he serves, by reflecting on it his own odium, to a degree more than equivalent to the votes that he brings to it. In all elections, legislative or municipal, down to the officers of a parish, the working of the aristocratic tendencies of the English are visible; the best persons are thrown uppermost, not from one attribute of aristocracy alone, such as birth, property, or intellect, without reference to the other components, but in a fair proportion collectively of each several attribute.

"This is not the case in other countries that have adopted the representative system. In America the opposite democratic principle is almost as evidently marked as at one time it was in Florence. Men of large property and ancient descent in the United States have a less chance

of the popular suffrage than those who unite poverty with ambition, and in whom the electors think they will find the most supple delegates or the most vehement talkers. The man whom in an English borough the candidate would employ to address the audience from an open window, or at a public-house, in America would himself be the popular candidate. There, in fact, the higher orders in property and station, as a body, shrink from the contest, and the members of these orders are found in very small proportion amidst the representatives of the State. In the new constitution which exists in the kingdom of Sardinia, few of the larger landed proprietors find, or indeed can stand for, seats in the national chamber. In the Germanic States, the representative system did not advance the ambition of the *Edelmann* or well-born, but of the professor and the lawyer. In France, the Chamber, when free, had a larger sprinkling from the ancient *noblesse* and the great mercantile families, than in the States referred to. But still the aristocratic proportion was not for a moment to be compared to the relative members in the English House of Commons; and the essential attribute of aristocracy, as it prevails in England—viz., the weight of unblemished public character—was almost unknown. The *homme d'esprit* of France, like the smart man of America, was in no degree mulcted of the influence due to his cleverness by a reputation not favourable to his honesty. But character with us is not only indispensable to the man who aspires to high command in the State, but sometimes, if accompanied with very ordinary business-like capacities, obtains an ascendancy denied to the largest possessions and the most eminent abilities. In no other country but England could an Althorp have acquired an

ascendancy denied to the vast possessions of * * * * and the brilliant eloquence of * * * *

"This spirit of aristocracy pervades the interior sentiment of all parties, even those which aim at the destruction of its legislative foundations. The mob is accustomed to be addressed by the title of 'Gentlemen,' and is extremely alive to all that realises or offends the ideal which the peer and the cobbler alike comprehend under that national appellation. The popular candidate lowers himself in the eyes of the populace if he exhibit rudeness or vulgarity, utter a mean and sordid sentiment, or indulge, unprovoked by attack, in personal abuse of some decorous opponent. On the other hand, the populace is proud of a champion in proportion as he represents in his birth, his station, his chivalrous bearing, his courteous manners, his fearless spirit, his spotless honour, the distinguishing features of the English aristocrat. The reasons that have grafted the aristocratic propensity in our habits of thought, lie deep and spread far. Their germs are in the first rude commonwealth of the Anglo-Saxons. Aristocracy was the essential character of their polity, and aristocracy of the most popular and durable character. Property and service were then as now qualifications, as well as hereditary birthright; and every man, whatever his origin, had an interest in the preservation of the ranks to which he himself might aspire. This principle rose gradually again, as the distinction of race between Norman and Saxon became effaced, and it is still one of the main reasons why aristocracy has taken root amongst the people, whom it has not excluded from the sun. Another cause for the strength and endurance of aristocracy has been its incorporation with the Legislature from the remotest period; and in proportion as

the people have become more powerful, so aristocracy, relaxing its hold on the hereditary chamber, has widened its authority in the elective, the greatest noble desiring to conciliate electors, as he anciently desired to attract retainers, his sons canvassing their votes and contending for the most laborious offices of State. Thus, perhaps, the highest class is the one which interest and ambition render the most sensitive to public opinion; and of all aristocracies that have existed, the English is perhaps the most remarkable for its identity with the tastes and habits, the social life and the moral doctrines, of the general population. Hence arises a third cause, for the prevalence of the aristocratic sentiment amongst us—viz., in the great epochs of national liberty, it is amongst the aristocracy that the leaders or idols of the people have been found, so that history itself is made their title-deed to popular affection.

"Much of these benefits, whether to the higher class or to the general condition of English society, must be ascribed to the felicitous commixture of the hereditary with the elective principle that pervades the constitution. Were there no hereditary chamber, there would have been those constant shocks to public security in the ambition of the great which finally destroyed the commonwealth of ancient Rome. If men of colossal fortunes and lofty ancestral names had no influence on public affairs, except through popular elections or court favour, they would become the most terrible of demagogues or the most servile of courtiers. The House of Peers, independent by theory both of the hustings and the throne, yet in practice reflecting the shadow of both, has been the great safety-valve of those evils that otherwise result from the existence of an opulent patrician order. For

the security of the people it answers the purpose of the Greek ostracism, which was justified on the necessity of expelling the men who possessed a disproportionate influence over the State; while in presenting a fair field for the exercise of manly intellect, and offering honours derived yet more from the esteem of the people than the favour of the Crown, it has preserved the British nobles as a class from that indolence and effeminacy which have corrupted the nobility of other countries, when civilisation destroyed their martial attributes without proffering in substitute a civil career for energies rusted by disuse. In fine, perhaps we cannot better sum up the advantages effected by an hereditary chamber, than in the concise and pregnant sentences of Bentham.

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CHAPTER IV.

The Aristocratic Principle further explained.

"It seems clear, then, that the principle and the sentiment of aristocracy are deeply imbedded in the various strata of our political and social system; that aristocracy, in short, is inseparable from the organisation of the English commonwealth; and that, if it were to be destroyed, the destruction would neces-

† The manuscript of this Essay contains no indication of the passage here referred to. But Bentham's testimony to the advantages of an hereditary chamber must have been as reluctant as Balaam's benediction upon Israel. He was the vehement and invariable opponent of second chambers, and especially of hereditary ones. He exhorted the Portuguese, and his "fellow-citizens" of France, on no account to incorporate such a deformity as a second chamber into their new and model constitutions; and in reiterated denunciations of the English House of Lords, he "rid his bosom of much

sitate an entire change in the national character as well as the political system. It would be a new people under a new polity, no more resembling the existing race than the contemporaries of the Horatii resembled those of Tiberius. It is unnecessary at this moment to argue the question whether such a change would be for the better or the worse. We are now but discussing the true genius of Conservatism, and it is sufficient to show why Conservatism, ever adhering to the original elements of the commonwealth in which it exists, must inevitably tend to conserve aristocracy, as the condition which, through all vicissitudes of government, has maintained the identity of the English people.

"But if Conservatism were to seek by direct laws to strengthen the outward power of aristocracy, it would instantly defeat its own object. For the influence of our aristocracy consists, not in its demarcation from, but its fusion, with the people. Like Sparta, its real strength is in the absence of fortified walls. If it were possible to give to an English peer the French *droits du seigneur*, that aristocracy which the English peer represents would become feeble in proportion as it became odious. Such privileges as peers now possess are not accorded to them as nobles, but as legislators. It is not a question of caste, it is a question of political expediency affecting the whole empire, whether the members of a senate,

perilous stuff." The only passage in all Bentham's works to which the words of this Essay appear applicable, occurs in the 'Essay on Political Tactics.' In the section of that treatise which discusses the "*division of the legislative body into two assemblies*," the advantages of a second chamber, as illustrated by the hereditary branch of the British Legislature, are summed up in sentences both "concise and pregnant." But I believe these sentences to have been written, not by Bentham, but by Dumont. —*Vide* Sir John Bowring's edition of Bentham's Works, vol. ii. p. 308-310.—L.

which could maintain no authoritative character if it lost the weight of personal and corporate dignity, should be free from arrest by civil process (as are the representatives of the people while Parliament is sitting), and in criminal cases should be tried by their own body. Did they inherit such privileges, not as legislators, but as nobles, the privileges would be shared by their sons, who, by blood and race, are equally noble with themselves. What Conservatism aims at is not the maintenance of nobility, except so far as nobility forms an element in the grander organisation of aristocracy; it aims at preserving the general influence, both on laws and on society, of the chief men or the best, whether in character, intelligence, property, or birth,—taking property as one of the guarantees, but only as one, that gives to a citizen a stake in the welfare of his country and the preservation of order—taking birth as one of the guarantees, but only as one, of that attachment to reputation for honour and integrity which is the natural sentiment of men brought up to respect an ancestral name, and aware that the more conspicuous their station, the more they become exposed to censure.

"To the merely political influence of birth and property alone in the conduct of affairs, the adherents to Conservatism have been always more indifferent than the party opposed to them. No party in the State has had leaders so frequently selected from the ranks of the people. The ideal aim of Conservatism in its relation to popular liberty would be to elevate the masses, in character and feeling, to that standard which Conservatism seeks in aristocracy—in other words, to aristocratise the community, so that the greatest liberty to the greatest number might not be the brief and hazardous effect of a

sudden revolutionary law, but the gradual result of that intellectual power to which liberty is indispensable. This brings us to the vexed question of Popular Education.

CHAPTER V.

National Education.

"It is scarcely satirical to say that the first persons whom we should like to see duly educated are those who have ranted the loudest on our national deficiencies in education. That which tests the amount and quality of national education is the general intellectual standard of a nation. This standard is higher in Great Britain than in any country in Europe. They who have sought to institute comparisons unfavourable to us with Prussia or Holland, have relied on statistics as to the relative proportions of population that can read or write, or that have received school instruction. But the education of a people does not depend solely on reading and writing; and only a small portion of intellectual ideas are derived from schools. Education is derived from four sources: 1st, the example and precepts of home; 2d, the lessons acquired at school; 3d, the knowledge obtained in practical life from observation and converse; 4th, those additions to wisdom which reflection and experience enable the individual to make for himself. School education is therefore but one of four sources of national and individual instruction. Of all instruction for a community, that which inculcates in early childhood a clear sense of moral obligations is the most valuable. This is, for the most part, acquired at home.

Parents may be unable to read and write, but their lives may teach their children to be honest and industrious, faithful to trust, and patient under trial. Honesty, industry, fidelity, fortitude — these are ideas that preserve a commonwealth, and secure the superiority of races more than a general diffusion of the elements of abstract science. No doubt schools at Athens were more numerous, and scholars more instructed in doctrinal learning, at the time of Demosthenes than in the age of Themistocles. But the moral qualities of the Athenians were immeasurably deteriorated. The ideas prevalent in the latter age were less valuable to the State than those of a generation with hardier virtues and ruder culture. There was more learning amongst the Romans at the time of Petronius than at the time of Cato the Censor; but who would prefer the ideas prevalent amongst the contemporaries of Petronius to those which formed the contemporaries of Cato? 'I have learned but three things,' said Cyrus; 'to ride, to bend the bow, and to speak the truth.' The Medes, whom Cyrus subdued, had listened to the learning of the Magi, and the learning had not fitted them to cope with the comparative handful of mountaineers trained to activity and valour. Some ten thousand of English sailors who may never have read a page of one of our great authors, might perhaps suffice to overturn the empire of China, in which education is universally diffused, and in which the great officers of State pass through college examinations.

"National instruction comprehends, therefore, those national ideas which, in the emulation or contest between one people and another, secure a superiority which the schoolmaster alone does not bestow. The qualities essential to the freedom or hardihood of a

people are sometimes, from the mere habit of association, dependent on what appear to the ordinary observer trivial peculiarities or antiquated prejudices. Thus Cyrus was advised to change the dress of the Lydians for the loose robes worn by the Medes. The womanly garments were supposed to affect the manly spirit of those who wore them; but it is more probable that the sense of subjugation and desire of liberty were kept alive by the mere distinction in dress between the conquerors and conquered; and the idiosyncrasy of the people became gradually lost as the outward and hereditary signs of it became abolished. For the same reason, the Highlanders were forbidden their ancient Celtic costume.

"Ideas very unphilosophical in themselves often exercise a salutary influence over human actions. Lord Nelson deemed it the first article of belief in his naval catechism that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen. A physiologist would certainly be unable to prove by any course of lectures that there was just foundation for this dogma; but if the unreasoning belief in it made the Englishman face, cheerful and undaunted, three times his own numbers, it was a prejudice that his country would not have thanked any physiologist for correcting. A celebrated philosopher justly says, that the belief in our own force is the secret of force itself.

"The ideas that Englishmen in general acquire at home, from the talk, life, and example even of uneducated parents, form a considerable portion of their eminence among races. It would be invidious to institute a comparison between ourselves and the members of other civilised communities in the various details of social morality. Perhaps in each individual detail we are

excelled or equalled by others. The Italian and the Spaniard are more sober and abstemious; the Frenchman is more sensitive on the point of honour—more affectionate, too, in the relationship between parent and child; the American unites the same fidelity in the conjugal relations with a more enterprising desire of improving their condition. The German, on the other hand, if more slothful, is more mild. But, on the aggregate, the English are remarkable for their attachment to the domestic ties; for charity, less in their judgment of each other than in their active sympathy with material ills; for a strong sense of justice, which creates in the remotest village a public opinion to counteract oppression; for plain honesty and for dogged patience; and, except in rare cases of excitement, for a singular respect to established law, which does not in any way lead to inert submission, or chill their active efforts to alter the law, whenever they deem its operations iniquitous or injurious. All these characteristics are insensibly transmitted from parent to child, and are almost wholly irrespective of formal scholastic tuition. The liberty of opinion which has prevailed amongst us since the Reformation, has also engendered an element of Conservatism in what at first glance may appear wholly anti-Conservative—viz., the influences of religious dissent. In a community such as France, in which, with the comparatively small exception of the Huguenots, one theological creed alone stands between religion and infidelity, there is always this practical evil, that when an individual rejects that single creed, he passes at once to infidelity. This evil is greatest in large populations, especially manufacturing towns. In rural districts, the priest there, as the clergyman of the Establishment here, does not lose his spiritual authority,

unless he has the misfortune to become personally unpopular. But as in all congregations of men, in which old thoughts are constantly brought into collision with new ideas, in which the mental operations of skilled labour lead the mind to question whatever exists, while they do not leave sufficient leisure for dispassionate and profound inquiry, the disturbing element is necessarily introduced into religious faith. Here in England, as in America, the varieties of dissent become of inestimable value to the great bond of modern civilisation—Christianity itself. They present safety-valves for minds dissatisfied with Church doctrine—they open a field within the pale of the Gospel for that pride of reason and love of casuistry which came with awakened knowledge. The Dissenting clergyman has the advantage of being more on familiar terms with his flock than the State pastor. His flock adhere to him from a spirit of partisanship, as well as from religious convictions. It is rarely that a Dissenter, in England at least, quits his communion; still more rarely that he becomes an avowed sceptic. The scandal which indecorum of life would entail upon a whole sect, not too numerous and too ancient to disregard single instances of frailty, conduces to a certain austerity of morals. And even if this be sometimes accompanied by hypocrisy, hypocrisy is still the salutary homage paid by vice to virtue. Thus, while in Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, those who are not Roman Catholics may be said to have no religion at all; in our great urban and manufacturing communities—though of course there are proportions of the population which are infidel—the Wesleyans, the Baptists, the Independents, the Unitarians themselves, preserve a common reverence still to the broad morality of the Gospel.

"It is obvious that this respect for Christianity is not valuable only upon sacred grounds, nor only for that influence on individual conduct which conduces to the safety of the State in its control over individual crime and vice, but also in its check upon such social and political theories as the various ministers of religion would discountenance as inimical to Christianity. Thus the socialism and communism which have had proselytes so numerous in France, and, indeed, in the Germanic States —and which, though now awed into silence, are liable at any time to rise again into formidable force, whenever the popular mind in those countries is again free to unlock all the stormy ideas that lie within its prison-house— have never been much favoured by the leaders of English democracy. And all the virtues and energies of Mr Owen have failed to lift into the dignity of danger those theories that tend to emancipate the human race from the golden chain which, in linking man to his Maker, effects the surest bond of society, by associating the natural aspirations to perpetual progress with that faith in immortality above which enforces the sense of responsibilities below."

Here ends this sketch of an Essay on Conservatism, but not without having clearly indicated the directions in which the subject of it might have been further developed. Imperfect though it be, it is an eminently characteristic expression of its writer's political philosophy. Throughout life, to use his own words, his "ideal aim, in all relation to popular liberty, was to elevate the masses in character and feeling to the standard which Conservatism seeks in aristocracy; in other words, to aristocratise the community, so that the greatest liberty

to the greatest number might not be the brief and hazardous effect of a sudden revolutionary law, but the gradual result of growth in the intellectual power indispensable to permanent political liberty." * * * It is in accordance with this "ideal aim" that, as a writer belonging to no literary coterie, and always endeavouring at least to enlist the greatest sympathies of the greatest number, he yet never stooped to write down to a low standard of popular taste.

In 1852 my father re-entered Parliament (from which he had been absent eleven years), without having changed his political opinions on any question except that of the Ballot. But whilst his political opinions remained unaltered, the political circumstances of the country had been profoundly modified.

The Liberal party had long carried into law all those measures on behalf of which my father's sympathies had been given to its efforts. The programme of its Whig leaders was played out. The aims and instincts of its Radical supporters had become less national, and either more democratic or more exclusively commercial. On the other hand, the old Tory party had been shivered to pieces by what the majority of its adherents still resented as the betrayal of their confidence in Sir Robert Peel. Some of his most experienced followers, and not a few of his most promising disciples, had openly joined their old opponents, the Liberals. They joined them, however, as Xenophon's Greeks offered to join the army of Artaxerxes—not as conquered, but as allied, forces. In the Liberal party itself, the influence of the Manchester school was already predominant. That party was now less directly identified with the constitutional reforms which the Tories had opposed,

than with the principles of economic reform to which some of them had been converted. The fiscal policy of the Liberal party received from the alliance of the Peelites an accession of zeal and power. Its movement in the direction of further constitutional change was suspended for lack of popular pressure; and political movement, unenforced by popular pressure, was not one of the doctrines of that illustrious statesman in whose school the Peelites had been trained. The other remnant of the once formidable Parliamentary phalanx broken up by Sir Robert Peel, continued, however, to mistrust the moderation of a party whose motive power was still supplied by its least moderate members. This group of politicians, who could no longer be called Tories in the full and original sense of that appellation, now appealed to popular sympathy as the Conservatives of a reformed constitution, which had, twenty-nine years before, been presented by their opponents to the nation as the perfection of popular freedom and political sagacity.

Such a party would naturally recommend itself more than any other to the sympathies of a man who had, throughout his life, disapproved the fiscal policy which now united Peelites and Whigs; who had as consistently approved the constitutional reform effected by the union of Whigs and Radicals; and who apprehended more danger to the constitution, thus reformed and established, from the Radicals who were still anxious to disturb, than from the Conservatives who now desired to maintain, it.

Emancipated from all party pledges, standing apart from active political life, reviewing without passion and without prejudice in the maturity of middle age, the practical results of that great constitutional change in which the political enthusiasm of his youth had been

invested, he probably found in their unanticipated imperfection much to moderate the confidence which should be accorded to the sanguine predictions of reformers; whilst, at the same time, in their general adequacy he would doubtless recognise sufficient reason to deprecate further experiments in representative government.

My father's Liberalism had always been national, never democratic. The consolidation of our colonial empire, the maintenance on high ground of our imperial power, the generous acceptance of our international duties, the dignified assertion of our international rank, the foremost place in the movement of mankind for English intellect, English humanity,—these were the objects for which he fought and marched under every political standard that offered a symbol round which to rally or to organise the social and intellectual forces that seemed to him most conducive to the advancement or defence of England's highest greatness.

From the point of view whence he had always, without reference to the circumstances of the moment, regarded the abstract question of party honour, it was impossible that he should not keenly sympathise with the resentment of those Conservatives who considered themselves betrayed by their recent leader. With the cause of the landed gentry, when this class of the community was specially singled out for the most bitter attack by the Manchester manufacturers, under the leadership of a coterie of Whig converts, he was identified no less by his interests as a landowner than by his principles as a politician. Thus, true to convictions unchanged by a complete change of political circumstances and party programme, he re-entered as a Conservative the Legislature which he had quitted as a Liberal.

During the intervening period he had declined invitations to stand for Westminster and other Liberal constituencies, in consequence of his dissent from the economic doctrines of the Liberal party. In the exposition of principles on this and other questions with which the late Lord Derby subsequently identified the policy of his party by a remarkable speech, my father so entirely sympathised, that he no longer hesitated to offer it his public support. This he did by the publication of opinions which he had entertained for seventeen years, in a pamphlet entitled 'Letters to John Bull.' That pamphlet, published in the year 1851, rapidly ran through ten editions. A general election took place in the following year; and he was then returned to Parliament, after a sharp contest, as one of the three Conservative members for Hertfordshire, his own county. His first speeches in the new Parliament were on subjects connected with the prosecution of the Crimean war, in which the country was then engaged. I know not whether it was in consequence of the European eminence to which he had attained in literature during his long retirement from public life, or of other circumstances more appreciable by an assemblage of local delegates, but certain it is, that from the moment he entered it, he occupied in the newly elected Parliament a position of greater weight and authority than had been accorded to him by the Parliament of which he ceased to be a member in 1841. In the mean time, moreover, he had carefully studied and greatly improved the management of his voice as a public speaker. And although to the last, even in his most felicitous oratorical effects, the utterance and delivery were greatly inferior to the intellectual attributes of his eloquence, such as its wit, its sound common-sense,

its graceful and conciliatory courtesy—the large familiarity with books, and the immense knowledge of human nature which it invariably evinced; yet, judging of his speeches, without partiality, as a frequent listener to the debates in which they were spoken, I cannot hesitate to claim for him a foremost rank amongst the ten or twelve best Parliamentary orators of my own time. He was, during the latter years of his Parliamentary career, a great speaker. He was never a debater. And this was owing, not to any intellectual incapacity for quick reply (for some of his happiest oratorical effects were the consequence of interruptions that arrested his attention), but to a physical affliction from which he suffered during the whole of his life, and which at last prematurely terminated his laborious and beneficent existence. It was a disease of the ear, accompanied by deafness, which increased with increasing years. This physical infirmity, added to an intellectual temperament contemplative rather than disputatious, and which became still more so as the surplus energy of youth subsided, made public life extremely uncongenial to him.

> "The exulting sense, the pulse's maddening play
> That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way,
> And, for itself, can woo the approaching fight,"

he never felt. The "rapture of the strife," for the strife's sake, which enables so many English statesmen to "live laborious days,"—the love of power which made Lord Palmerston find office the best of anti-dyspeptics,—were quite incompatible with a temperament little cheered by personal success, and singularly sensitive to personal failure—a temperament more oppressed by the responsibilities, than animated by the charms, of office. Parliamentary life was to him an uncongenial element, and he only plunged

into it with a painful effort, much as Peter the Great used to plunge into the Neva in winter—not because he liked it, but because he was conscious of powers in himself which could not be otherwise developed; and this consciousness made him the despot of his own dislikes.

At the age of forty-three he thus described his own deficiencies as a man of action. "I am too irresolute and easily persuaded, except when my honour or sense of duty makes me obstinate. I have so great a dread of giving pain, that I have often submitted to be cheated to my face rather than wound the rogue's feelings by showing him that he was detected. I am indolent of body, though active of mind. I am painfully thin-skinned and susceptible; less so than I was in youth, but still too much so. I find it difficult to amalgamate with others and act with a party. The acting man should never be conscious of the absurdity and error which are more or less inseparable from every path of action. I am too impatient of subordination, an immense fault in the acting man. In all situations of command I act best when I have to defend others, not serve myself. I do not possess, or rather I have not cultivated (for no man can distinguish accurately between deficiencies from nature and those from disuse), the ready faculties in any proportion to my slower and more reflective ones. I have little repartee, my memory is slow, and my presence of mind not great.* My powers of speaking are very uncertain,

* In this, I think, he underrates himself. Instances of effective Parliamentary repartee will be found in the contents of these volumes. I might mention many others more pungent and entirely impromptu. But he suffered such acute discomfort whenever he thought that, by some unpremeditated rejoinder, he had without justifiable provocation given pain to an opponent, that, in deference to what I know would have been his own wishes, I suppress them. His wit, however, was thoroughly spontaneous.

and very imperfectly developed. I have eloquence in me, and have spoken even as an orator, but not in the House of Commons.* I cannot speak without either preparation or the pressure of powerful excitement. It would cost me immense labour to acquire the ready, cool trick of words with little knowledge and no heart in them, which is necessary for a Parliamentary debater. I might have acquired this once. Now it is too late."

In connection with this singular self-analysis, I shall here venture to give a curious illustration of that intensity of excitement under which the writer of it always suffered when speaking in public. Grillparzer, the great Austrian poet, was in London in the year 1836, and a frequent visitor to the gallery of the House of Commons during the debates on the Irish Tithes Bill. His impressions of those debates are thus given in his autobiography:

"My ear being unused to the language, I could only understand about half of what I heard; but the spectacle itself was exciting. I know not how the English Houses of Parliament are now arranged; but at that time the chamber of the House of Commons was a long and comparatively narrow one. The two great Parliamentary parties were ranged opposite to each other, with but a narrow space between them, like two armies drawn out in order of battle; and the orators on each side, like the Homeric heroes, occasionally advanced, and hurled their oratorical javelins into the ranks of the opposing host. The best speaker, or at least the most vivacious, was Sheil. Peel, the Minister, was cold; but he spoke fluently, and with the force of conviction. O'Connell and the

* His greatest orations were, however, delivered in the House of Commons—but subsequent to this date.

others were less effective than you would suppose from their reported speeches.

"The frequent '*Hear, hear!*' of the House, which have the effect of an intermittent chant with a certain tune in it, are often only dictated by party tactics, to cover the hesitations of the speaker, and give him time to collect his ideas. The whole effect, however, is decidedly grandiose and heart-stirring.

"I commonly attended these debates alone. But one evening a Viennese friend* accompanied me. The crowd was immense, and we had to wait a long while in the lobby. M. F. left my side for a few moments, and returned with a look of embarrassment, the cause of which I only discovered afterwards. In order to obtain our admission, he had told the door-keeper that he was accompanied by a German author, who was a friend of Mr Bulwer's. I was not aware of this little stratagem, however, when the door-keeper presently approached us, followed by a young man dressed to perfection, and wonderfully good-looking (*wunderhübsch*). 'Here is Mr Bulwer,' said the door-keeper; and then turning to him, 'This, sir, is your friend, the German gentleman.'

"Bulwer, however, at once freed me from all embarrassment by putting his arm round my shoulder, and drawing me with him into one of the waiting-rooms. 'The house is crammed this evening,' he said, 'and I fear I cannot find you a place; but come again to-morrow.' Soon afterwards he left us; and I then observed that he staggered in his gait like a drunken man. I presently learned, however, that he had just been speaking, and that what I had taken for intoxication was in fact the reaction (*Nachwirkung*) of nervous tension. I was all

* M. Figdor (a Viennese merchant, I believe).

the more resolved to conceal my name from him. If a German poet is not called Schiller or Goethe, he may travel over the whole world unknown."

The passage above translated from Grillparzer's autobiography is, in this last sentence, extremely characteristic of that writer himself. Certainly one of Germany's greatest poets *since* Goethe and Schiller, he was hypochondriac, sensitively reserved and proud, acutely suffering indeed from many wounded and unrevealed susceptibilities, but withal as sternly high-minded, brave, truthful, and self-dependent as Beethoven.

It was to the exercise of moral rather than intellectual faculties that my father owed whatever success he attained to in public life, notwithstanding the disadvantages of a temperament that enormously increased the labour commonly requisite for such success. But *labor omnia vincit;* and he was so fully justified by his own experience of life in preaching this maxim to others, that in all his views of education he set far less store upon the acquisition of knowledge than upon that of courage, industry, and will. Thus, in some remarks addressed in 1856 to the scholars of the High School at Bishop's Stortford, he says: "Boys, when I look at your young faces I could fancy myself a boy once more. I go back to the days when I too tried for prizes, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing. I was once as fond of play as any of you, and in this summer weather I fear my head might have been more full of cricket than of Terence or even Homer. But still I can remember, that whether at work or at play, I had always a deep though a quiet determination that sooner or later I would be a somebody, or do a something. That determination continues with me to this day. It keeps one hope of my boyhood fresh, when

other hopes have long since faded away. And now that we separate, let it be with that hope upon both sides—on my side and on yours—that before we die we will do something to serve our country that may make us prouder of each other; and if we fail in this, that at least we shall never wilfully or consciously do anything to make us ashamed of each other."

In such a strain as this Epictetus might have spoken to his young Stoics. And, indeed, the words just quoted are singularly in accordance with a striking passage in the discourse of that philosopher upon the 'Preservation of Character.' "You," says Epictetus, "have no care but to resemble the rest of mankind; one thread in a garment desires not distinction from the other threads. But I would be the purple, that small and brilliant part which gives lustre and beauty to the rest."

I have never lost the impression made upon me, when I was yet a youth, by an oratorical success of my father's, achieved solely by personal courage and presence of mind. I have said that his first election for Herts was hotly contested. I should add that the opposition tactics of the Liberal agents were chiefly directed against himself, as being the newest and also the most eminent of the Conservative candidates. The farmers who supported those candidates had ridden into Hertford early on the nomination day, and endeavoured to occupy the ground in front of the hustings. But this heavy cavalry was ignominiously routed by a severe fire of stones and brickbats, and the field of battle remained in possession of a body of roughs from Ware — the foot soldiers of the Liberal army.

The attempts of the two senior Conservative candidates to obtain a hearing from this hostile audience failed

lamentably; but when, after some helpless gesticulation in dumb show, they retired to the back of the booth, and my father advanced to the front of it, the storm of yells and execrations broke out with redoubled fury. Under the hustings and on a level with the crowd was a small balcony erected for accommodation of the reporters of the London Press; and in it those gentlemen, having nothing to report but inarticulate noise, were seated like the gods of Epicurus, who

> "Smile, and find a music centred in a doleful song,
> Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong."

Suddenly there broke from the crowd a cry of surprise, succeeded by a silence of curiosity. On to the reporters' table in this balcony my father had leapt down from the hustings above it, upsetting the ink-bottles, and scattering the pens uplifted to record his discomfiture. He was determined to be heard, and he was heard. He had gained all he needed,—a moment's silence. Wisely refraining from any attempt at a set speech, he entered into conversation with the noisiest of the hostile ringleaders, mollified the man by a good-humoured joke, shook hands with him, drew him into a humorous argument, and then slid imperceptibly from personal conversation into public speech. He spoke, I think, for an hour or more; and was listened to in the most respectful silence, interrupted only by the most cordial cheers.

Re-entering Parliament, my father opposed the enlistment of foreign levies for the prosecution of the Crimean war; and had his warnings been successful, we should certainly have been spared one of the most humiliating of the many humiliating episodes in our relations with the American Government. Every one of his predictions were distressingly verified by the results of that ill-

advised measure. On various occasions he severely criticised both the conduct of the war and some of the negotiations for the peace. Posterity will certainly not remove from the memory of Lord Panmure the merited stigma with which he branded it in his speech upon the fall of Kars. For the first time in his life he spoke and acted with the Manchester Liberals in those denunciations of the Chinese war which are the subject of some of his best speeches in Parliament. He also protested energetically, on grounds similar to those which have been developed by Mr Mill, against the extinction of the East India Company's government.

When in February 1858 Lord Derby returned to power, he intrusted to my father the Colonial affairs of his Government, although my father had never before held any office. His official life as Secretary of State for the Colonies, though brief, was active, and pregnant in results. He attended with the most scrupulous exactitude to every detail of his administrative duties. He did nothing vicariously. And although his personal relations with the experienced and exceedingly able men who permanently preside over the chief departments of the Colonial Office were at all times marked by the most cordial confidence and mutual respect, yet on no question, whatever its comparative unimportance, did he ever leave the Office to "work itself."

Immediately after his assumption of office he got rid of the old and ineffectual mail contract with Australia. He gave to the West Indian colonies the advantage of an Encumbered Estates Bill. He removed a long-standing cause of dispute with France by the exchange of Albuda and Portendio. He terminated the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company, and called into existence

the magnificent colony of British Columbia, with the very soil of which his name is still identified.*

To relate the circumstances which occasioned the creation of this valuable colony, or the steps so vigorously and successfully taken to establish law, order, and prosperity, amidst a fortuitous population of immigrant adventurers from all parts of the world, would exceed the purpose and the scope of the present Memoir. Nor can I here attempt even the most cursory record of my father's colonial administration. His general views upon questions of colonial policy will be found in his speeches on such subjects. But I cannot forbear from citing here, as evidence of the spirit which he carried into every detail of his administrative work, the flattering testimony of an eminent colonial governor.

Sir George Bowen, the present Governor of Victoria, was in 1859 Government Secretary in the Ionian Islands, from which post he was, on purely public grounds, promoted by my father (who had no personal acquaintance with him) to be the first Governor of Queensland. Alluding to this fact (in a letter dated Melbourne, 4th December 1873, for which I am all the more indebted to his Excellency, because I have not myself the honour of being personally acquainted with him), Sir George adds, that "on this occasion he" (my father) "wrote me the admirable compendium of the duties of a colonial governor, of which I send you herewith a certified copy—for publication, if you desire it. I assure you that I attribute, in no slight degree, the success of my career to my strict adherence to the advice given in the

* "I have lately received intelligence from Mr Assistant-Commissioner Travaillot, dated 'Lytton,' 19th December 1858, &c. &c." — Governor Douglas to Sir E. B. Lytton; Victoria, 21st January 1859.

accompanying letter. It would be well that it should be published, if it were only that future colonial governors may have the advantage of studying it." *

I subjoin the letter which I have received: Sir G. Bowen's permission to publish.

SIR E. B. LYTTON TO SIR G. BOWEN.

"GREAT MALVERN, *29th April* 1859.

"DEAR SIR GEORGE BOWEN,—I have the pleasure to inform you that the Queen approves of your appointment to Moreton Bay, which will henceforth bear the appellation of Queensland. Accept my congratulations, and my assurances of the gratification it gives me to have promoted you to a post in which your talents will find ample scope.

"There is not much to learn beforehand for your guidance in this new colony. The most anxious and difficult question connected with it will be the 'squatters.' But in this, which is an irritating contest between rival interests, you will wisely abstain as much as possible from interference. Avoid taking part with one or the other. Ever be willing to lend aid to conciliatory settlement; but, in order to secure that aid, you must be strictly impartial. Remember that the first care of a governor in a free colony is to shun the reproach of being a party man. Give all parties and all the ministries formed the fairest play.

"Mark and study the idiosyncrasies of the community; every community has some peculiar to itself. Then, in

* Sir George Bowen, after serving for eight years in Queensland, was promoted by the Duke of Buckingham in 1868 to New Zealand, and in 1873 by Lord Kimberley to Victoria; which I believe is generally called the "Blue Ribbon" of the Colonial service.—L.

your public addresses, appeal to those which are the noblest;—the noblest are always the most universal and the most durable. They are peculiar to no party.

"Let your thoughts never be distracted from the paramount object of finance. All States thrive in proportion to the administration of revenue.

"You will, as soon as possible, exert all energy and persuasion to induce the colonists to see to their self-defence internally. Try to establish a good police; if you can then get the superior class of colonists to assist in forming a militia or volunteer corps, spare no pains to do so.

"It is at the commencement of colonies that this object can be best effected. A colony that is once accustomed to depend on imperial soldiers for aid against riots, &c., never grows up into vigorous manhood. Witness the West Indian colonies.

"Education the colonists will be sure to provide for. So they will for religion.

"Do your best always to keep up the pride in the mother country. Throughout all Australia there is a sympathy with the ideal of a gentleman. This gives a moral aristocracy. Sustain it by showing the store set on integrity, honour, and civilised manners; not by preferences of birth, which belong to old countries.

"Whenever any distinguished members of your colony come to England, give them letters of introduction, and a private one to the Secretary of State, whoever he may be. This last is not sufficiently done in colonies; but all Secretaries of State who are fit for the office should desire it. You may quote my opinion to this effect to my successors.

"As regards despatches; your experience in the

Ionian Islands will tell you how much is avoided in despatches that may be made public, and done in private letters. This practice is at present carried to inconvenience and abuse. Questions affecting free colonies may come before Parliament, of which no public documents whatever afford the slightest explanation.

"The communications from a Government should be fourfold:—

"1st, *Public* despatches.

"2d, *Confidential*—intended for publication if at all required.

"3d, *Confidential*—not to be published unless *absolutely necessary* for defence of *measures by yourself and the Home Department*.

"4th, *Letters strictly private*;—and these, if frank to a Minister or to an Under-Secretary like Mr Merivale, should be guarded to *friends*;—and touch as little as possible upon names and parties in the colony. A Government may rely on the discretion of a Department, never on that of private correspondents.

"5th, As you will have a free press, you will have some papers that may be abusive. Never be thin-skinned about these: laugh them off. Be pointedly courteous to all editors and writers — acknowledging socially their craft and its importance. The more you treat people as gentlemen, the more 'they will behave as such.'

"After all, men are governed as much by the heart as by the head. Evident sympathy in the progress of the colony; traits of kindness, generosity, devoted energy, where required for the public weal; a pure exercise of patronage; an utter absence of vindictiveness or spite; the fairness that belongs to magnanimity;—these are

the qualities that make governors powerful, while men merely sharp and clever may be weak and detested.

"But there is one rule which I find pretty universal in colonies. The governor who is the least *huffy*, and who is most careful not to overgovern, is the one who has the most authority. Enforce civility upon all minor officials. Courtesy is a duty public servants owe to the humblest member of the public.

"Pardon all these desultory hints, which I daresay may seem to you as old as the hills; and wishing you all health and enjoyment in the far land, believe me yours very truly, E. B. Lytton."

"*P.S.*—Get all the details of the squatter question from the Department,—master them thoroughly. Convert the jealousies now existing between Moreton Bay and Sydney into emulation. Your recollection of the old Greek States will tell you what strides States can take through emulation. I need not say that the sooner you go out to the new colony the better.

"You are aware that since I have been in this office I have changed the old colonial uniform for the same as that worn in the imperial service. I consider it a great point to assimilate the two services in outward emblems of dignity. The Queen's servant is the Queen's servant, whether at Westminster or at the antipodes. You will have therefore to get a new dress. When do you wish to go? E. B. L."

"The more you treat people as gentlemen, the more they will 'behave as such.'" This was the instinct of his nature; and in it is the explanation of all that was both Liberal and Conservative in his political aspira-

tions. Not to pull down the highest, but to exalt the lowest class of the community; to elevate the soul of the whole nation; to induce every man born the free citizen of a great empire to feel that he is by birth a great gentleman.

Thus, in addressing the boys of a public school, he says: "You will have observed, my young friends, that I have addressed you more than once to-day emphatically as *gentlemen*. I think you are brought up to deserve that lofty title. What is a gentleman in our English sense of the word? Does his claim to the title rest only on his estates and his pedigree? Heaven forbid! Like all civilised societies, we give due weight to rank and wealth. And wealth has perhaps even more influence than it deserves. But the name *gentleman* is neither inherited nor bought. Where we see a man of superior education, of courteous manners, and, above all, of high honour, we call him a gentleman, though he be the son of a peasant: and when a man wants all these qualities we say he is no gentleman, though he be the son of a duke." And again elsewhere he says, as the highest praise he can bestow upon a school: "Greatly as I have been pleased with their" (the pupils') "admirable recitatations from Terence and Homer, yet I think that schools which procure for the majority of their pupils such broad elements of sound instruction, physical health, and manly character, work better for the nation than if they could produce in a century some boy who wrote plays like Terence and verses to compare with Homer. What has most pleased me is, that whilst addressing my young audience, I never more elicited their sympathy than when appealing to those high sentiments which make men brave, honourable, and patriotic."

The same spirit breathes through his admirable Essay on the "Efficacy of Praise,"—one of the wisest and most thoughtful of those papers which, under the title of 'Caxtoniana,' contain the reflections of his matured experience upon men and books. I have already said that my father belonged to that class of reformers whose object is *improvement*. Improvement of one kind or other was indeed the unceasing occupation of his life. His instinct was to improve everything which came under the influence of his mind. Himself, his house, his property, his country—the comfort of the poor, the humanity of the rich, the means of knowledge for the ignorant, the rewards of knowledge for the learned, the prosperity of the people at home, the influence of its Government abroad. No man since Goethe ever laboured so incessantly at the improvement and completion of his own intellectual, moral, and even physical being all round, *totus, teres, atque rotundus*. But between him and Goethe there was this essential difference: In my father's temperament the incentive to self-improvement was always an intense desire to be instrumental in the improvement of his fellow-creatures. He was a thoroughly civic being. Goethe lived in a time less discouraging than the present to all enthusiasm on behalf of the general improvement of the world. But from the height of his own Olympus he beheld the world around and beneath him, with little sympathy in its social and political agitations. He was *selbstandig;* but neither patriotism nor philanthropy actively influenced his scheme of self-culture. My father lived late into an age when philanthropy is deservedly discredited by the want of common-sense with which its professors have associated

it, and when patriotism appears to be repudiated by the latest political sages, as an old-fashioned prejudice, incompatible with free trade and free labour. In such an age, a wise man, perhaps, if he be not the dupe of its promises, will best secure the freedom and dignity of his own individuality by disentangling it as much as possible from the moral, social, and political *surrounding* in which he lives. It may be that the less he attempts to improve what he deplores in the world around him, the less mischief he will do. But this was not possible to my father. He could not think or feel without reference to the thoughts and feelings of those around him; he could not live and move and have his being wholly out of the social and political world to which he belonged. He was sensitive to the opinion of others, and vibrated quickly to its touch. Praise for mere ability gave him little pleasure, and the absence of it little pain; but praise for any kind of moral goodness, the ready recognition of a generous motive or a lofty principle in his conduct, would almost overpower him; and I have frequently seen it bring the tears to his eyes. Similarly he writhed under calumny, or any misinterpretation of his moral character. "It is more than injustice," he once exclaimed—"it is ingratitude. Men calumniate me, and I would lay down my life to serve them."

Consequently, whenever he felt himself out of harmony with the tone of the social and political world around him, he suffered. Everything that tended to lower his pride in his country, or alienate his sympathy from his countrymen, gave him positive pain. His own efforts, whether in politics or in literature, were constantly directed towards the maintenance of an heroic standard

in the national mind. In a letter to the late Mr Herman Merivale, containing some remarkable criticisms upon the 'Historical Studies' of that able writer, he says, speaking of Goethe and Schiller: "Although we are compelled to allow the low standard of man (and ought, indeed, to admit it, because it enforces charity), yet surely it is our interest as *men* to preserve the high standard. That is the true question as regards their influence on practical human life, between Goethe and Schiller. Just as, if they had lived in the same day (and that day a serene artistic one), it would have been the question between Shakespeare and Milton—a question between width and height. Schiller preserves for us what is most valuable to men—the heroic standard. You admit that we prefer Schiller in youth, but take to Goethe in our maturer age. But as a reasoner for your country, would you not wish it to be always in its youth? What Nelson is among captains, Schiller is among poets. If I could enforce upon a practical, sceptical, commonplace, energetic people like the English, any one doctrine, it would be this: 'Your morbific tendency is to run into the vulgar type; in order to counteract that tendency always revere the heroic one.' But how are we to revere the heroic if we are told by our literary authorities that Schiller is all wrong; that he is at best only one of the smaller divinities; and that a realism with which we are already overloaded in England is something immeasurably more entitled to veneration than that *ideal* conception of excellence which three centuries ago Roger Ascham thought necessary in order to keep man up to the ordinary level? In our time and land there is no fear of some imaginative vagary

in favour of heroic types. The tendency is all the other way. Anything more low than the standard of modern criticism it is impossible for a creature above the rank of a caterpillar (who denies the possibility of a butterfly) to conceive."

During the latter part of my father's Parliamentary career, his greatest oratorical efforts were the speeches spoken by him on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. One of these speeches elicited from an illustrious opponent the most cordial and generous expressions of admiration. Lord Palmerston told the Queen that he considered it one of the finest speeches he had ever heard spoken in the House of Commons. But though my father's tenure of office was short, it tried his health severely; and when he retired from office, he found that he had put an excessive strain upon the nervous energies of a frame muscularly strong, but constitutionally delicate. When Lord Derby formed his last Cabinet, my father was for this reason unable to join it. And though he entered the Upper House with every desire and intention to give more than a passive support to his political friends in it, circumstances prevented him from ever addressing that House. Once, indeed, he moved the adjournment of the debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill; and so great was the desire to hear him speak on that question, that the next evening both the House and all its galleries were crammed with expectant listeners, who were much disappointed when Lord Grey rose to resume the debate. The speech then unspoken I am now able to present to the readers of these volumes, at the close of which it will be found.

This, and the few others which I have selected from

amongst numerous drafts of speeches prepared for delivery in the House of Lords, will at least suffice to prove that, though a silent, he was not an intellectually inactive, member of that assembly. But his old infirmity of deafness, occasioned by an affection of the right ear, from which he had suffered since boyhood, now greatly interfered with his power to follow a debate; and bronchial cough, occasioning him constant discomfort, grievously affected his general health by obliging him to discontinue those habits of daily bodily exercise which had hitherto enabled him to undergo, with comparative impunity, the fatigue of constant brain-work, and more sedentary labour than is good for any man.

During the last years of his life he contemplated, with great discouragement and despondency, the pervading spirit, or want of spirit, in English politics, as it appeared from the political utterances both of Parliament and the Press. Yet most sincerely he admired the genius, and cordially respected the personal character, of the great Minister who was then governing England, with the support of an almost unprecedented Parliamentary majority; nor, indeed, have I received from any of my father's political contemporaries expressions of regard for his memory more generous, or more grateful to my feelings, than those with which I have been honoured by Mr Gladstone.

To his intellectual temperament, however, no less than to his political opinions, the chief measures and general bearing of the late Administration were repugnant. But it was not the tone of the Administration—it was what, rightly or wrongly, he supposed to be the tone of the English nation itself in reference to all the great

issues of national life at home, and international policy abroad, that filled him with dismay and alarm. To protest against it was the last act of his life; and this he did in the posthumous romance of 'Kenelm Chillingly,' his latest, and not his least earnest, appeal to his countrymen.

LYTTON.

PARIS, 2*d May* 1874.

I.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 5TH OF JULY 1831.

ON Monday, the 4th of July 1831, Lord John Russell moved the Second Reading of the Bill to amend the Representation of the People of England and Wales. The member for Sudbury, Sir John Walsh, moved as an amendment that the Bill should be read that day six months. The discussion upon this having lasted for three nights, a division was taken upon the amendment, which was rejected by 367 votes to 231—the original motion being then carried. The following Speech was made on the second night of the Debate by Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer, then M.P. for St Ives.

SIR,—So far as the people are concerned, it is not denied that the Bill is already carried; and the late election alone has rendered it idle and superfluous to insist on those more popular measures which, though founded at first on just reasoning, might now assume the appearance of unnecessary declamation. But I am glad to perceive that it is chiefly on the supposition that it is the tendency of the proposed Bill to affect not only the illegitimate influence but the due and wholesome power of the aristocracy, that the more enlightened and independent of the anti-Reformers are disposed to consider the question. It is on

this ground that I am desirous of meeting them. I will not challenge their premises, I will only combat their conclusion; and since, notwithstanding some remarks that have fallen from the noble Lord, the member for Wootton Basset, I am not yet so imbued with that spirit which must more or less pervade all political parties, as to feel my regard for principles at once strengthened and embittered by an habitual conflict with persons, I trust that I shall not lose the attention of the hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, if I refrain from exciting it by the harsh vituperations that have been so lavishly bestowed on our opponents. On the other hand, I trust that I shall be judged by the hon. Members opposite by the general tenor of the few observations I am about to make, and not by the verbal inaccuracy, or the unguarded heat of expression, which are necessarily incident to a want of practice in public speaking in general, and to a want of knowledge of this House in particular. I shall proceed, without further preamble, to what has long seemed to me the strongest, and is now the most ostensible, ground on which the anti-Reformers rest—namely, the probable manner in which the proposed Bill will affect the power of the aristocracy. And when we speak of the power of any political body distinct from the people, we must remember that that power is at this day solely the creature of public opinion; and that it is only in proportion as it loses or gains in public opinion that that power can really be said to be lessened or increased. Admitting this fact, which is so indisputable as to have passed into a truism, and glancing over the aspect of affairs, will any man say that the power of the aristocracy is now so safe, so secure in public opinion, that it ought, at once, to resist the idea of change? On the contrary, can any man note the commonest signs of the times, attend any political meeting, read any political writing, have the most shallow acquaintance with the organs of political opinion, and not confess, that so deep is the demarcation between the aristocracy and the people, that it has become sufficient alone to obtain popular suffrage, to declaim, however ignorantly, against aristocratic privilege? The anti-Reformers complain of this more loudly than the Reformers, and yet they refer us to

causes much more terrible and irremediable than those which really exist. Again and again—*usque ad nauseam*—they have referred us to the first French Revolution, and libelled the English aristocracy by comparing its situation with that of the French. But at this moment, when the English aristocracy are not popular, it will be well to remember that there is no analogy in the cases. The people of this country have not, as the people of France had, a long and black sum of offences against their superiors, to be scored off on the great reckoning day of revenge. The English aristocracy may occasionally be charged with a haughty neglect of the people, and with too obstinate a stand upon harsh laws and ungracious prerogatives. But they cannot be charged with the same terrible misuse of power that absolutely characterised the French; not with the same grasping oppression, not with the same unblushing venality, not with the same degrading sycophancy to royal vices, or the same ruthless indifference to national distress. The great wealth of the English aristocracy (and their consequent independence of the Court) has preserved them, as a body, from the double necessity of meanness and extortion, and enabled them, as individuals, to purchase popularity at the cheap cost of pecuniary expense. And if the cause of any odium they may have incurred, has no analogy to those causes which directed the vengeance of the French people against their *noblesse*, neither, on the other hand, can it be vaguely referred, as some hon. Gentlemen have attempted to refer it, merely to the general growth of liberal opinion. For it would be an assertion altogether without proof to say, that there has ever existed a period in this country,—at least, since the time of Jack Cade,—when the doctrine of equalisation of rank or property has obtained so extensively, that the people have formed a hatred to their superiors, merely from their superiority, or that they have cherished an animosity to power solely from a love for experiment. Whatever arguments may be alleged in favour of the Lostwithiels and the Old Sarums, it is not attempted to be denied that they have made not only the Parliament, but the aristocracy thus influencing the Parliament, unpopular to so great an excess, that not only all the ills of the State, the wars,

the expenditure, the debt, but even the very calamities inflicted by Providence, the scarcity, and the drought, have been laid to the charge of this noxious influence; and the very extravagance of these attacks, if matter of ridicule to the defenders of the system, is a proof at least of the extraordinary odium which the system has incurred. Here, then, at once is the cause of that great and growing division between classes which is so deeply to be feared: it is obvious, for the sake of the aristocracy alone (for if I am right in saying their power is the creature of public opinion, it is the aristocracy alone who can lose by a violent collision with public opinion), for the sake of the aristocracy alone, we ought to heal the division: and it is equally obvious, that in order to heal the division we must remove the cause of it. And thus, even if the people, whilst suffering under the disease, had not clamoured for the remedy, if the irritation felt under the present system had excited no agitation for any definite question of reform,—every true advocate, not of the people's interests only, but also of the interests of the aristocracy, ought, nevertheless, to endeavour to carry into effect, as soon as possible, the great main principle of this Reform. It has been said that, if you remove the nomination boroughs, you bring the House of Lords into direct collision with the House of Commons; and that the influence of the House of Lords, felt on the floor of that House, often preserves the former from the odium of rejecting popular measures before their own immediate tribunal. But was there ever anything so glaringly inconsistent as the application of this argument? Hon. Gentlemen are willing that the House of Lords shall now be brought into direct and violent collision with the House of Commons, lest it should be brought into collision with it hereafter. Hon. Gentlemen are willing that the House of Lords shall now incur the certain and collected odium of the country, for fear it should incur its possible and partial odium hereafter, in some imaginary epoch in futurity. But, passing over the notable inconsistency of the application of the argument, and granting the argument itself its full force—granting that there are times and occasions in which it is well that the influence of the House of Lords should be felt in this

House, and that it does serve to prevent any collision between the Assemblies—is it not evident that that influence would still remain, only exercised through a constitutional, not an invidious channel? Do hon. Gentlemen imagine that, after the passing of the Reform Bill, the aristocracy will suddenly be left alone in the world, without a single tenant possessed of a vote, or a single friend to whom that vote can be given? To hear such hon. Gentlemen one would suppose that we, the hard-hearted and ruthless reformers, are not meditating the petty victory of parliamentary Reform, but the much grander stroke of shipping off the whole of the aristocracy to Van Dieman's Land; or, at least, that by schedule A we shall not leave them an acre, and that by schedule B we shall cut them off with a shilling; and yet, is it not perfectly clear that these miserable victims of radical atrocity will still have sons and brothers, and cousins, and friends in this House? that they will still exercise a great and paramount influence in the towns near which they reside, and the counties which are now about, in receiving additional Members, to give the certainty of additional seats to the aristocracy? If hon. Members insist that the moment this House mirrors in some degree the opinions of the majority of the people, the House of Lords must succumb and perish, they do not prophesy its future, they utter its present condemnation. If this were true, the House of Lords is gone already; while we debate on its defence, the seal is put upon its abolition. A celebrated philosopher has felicitously observed, "that the greatest discoverer in science cannot do more than accelerate the progress of discovery." So in the career of nations, as of knowledge, you may advance, but you cannot contradict the genius of a people. The most democratic law cannot do more than hasten a democracy, which, before that law could be received, must have already become inevitable. At a time when authority can no longer support itself by the solemn plausibilities and the ceremonial hypocrisies of old, it is well that a government should be placed upon a solid and sure foundation. In no age of the world, but, least of all, in the present, can any system of government long exist which is menaced both by the moral intelligence

and the physical force of a country. In the present instance, we behold a system thus menaced, and therefore thus feeble, modified into one, placed not only on the affections of the populace, though at this juncture I should scarcely consider him wise who holds even the affections of the populace in contempt; but also on the opinions of that class which, in this country, fills up the vast space between the highest and the lowest, and whose Members are opposed to every more turbulent revulsion by all the habits of commerce and all the interests of wealth. But so entirely do I agree with the hon. Gentlemen opposite on one principle—namely, that it is the practical stability, and not the theoretical improvement of the commonwealth, that ought to be our first object—that I would become a willing and a cheerful convert to the rest of their sentiments on this great measure, the moment they can show me, amidst the tumults of neighbouring nations and the crash of surrounding thrones, a better security for the institutions of power than the love and confidence of an united and intelligent people.

II.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 31ST OF MAY 1832.

ON Thursday, the 31st of May 1832, pursuant to notice, the Member for Lincoln, Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer, moved the House for a Select Committee for the purpose of Inquiring into the state of the Laws affecting Dramatic Literature and the performance of the Drama. The motion was agreed to and the Committee appointed. On submitting his proposition to the House, the following speech was delivered.

SIR,—I rise to move for a Select Committee for the purpose of inquiring into the State of the Laws affecting Dramatic Literature and the performance of the Drama. We all know that there is a patent granted to the two great theatres for the performance of the drama. The extent and power of these patents, with the laws by which they are strengthened, have long been a matter of dispute; but by the late decision of a high judicial authority, it seems that elsewhere all performances worthy of the attendance of persons pretending to a reasonable degree of education—all performances, except those of the most mountebank and trumpery description, fit only for the stages of Bartholomew Fair—are to be considered as infringements of the law, and as

subjecting those who assist in them to serious penalties. The minor theatres are, therefore, at this moment—with their many thousand actors, proprietors, and decorators, who depend for support on their existence—without the pale of the law; and the question is, therefore, forced before the public in the following shape:—"How far is it expedient for the public, that privileges and enactments of this monopolising description should be continued: how far is it expedient that the minor theatres should be suppressed, and the exclusive patents of the two great theatres should be continued?" Sir, in the first place, I contend that the original reason for suppressing the minor theatres has long since ceased to exist; and, in the second place, I contend that the only possible ground upon which these patents are given in trust to the metropolitan theatres has not been fulfilled. Now, the reason for suppressing the minor theatres appears both by Act of Parliament and in the literary history of these times. In the licentious period in which the first patents were granted —viz., the time of Charles II., in all the unbridled reaction and intoxicated ferment of the Restoration—it seemed that the minor theatres were the scene of very disorderly and improper exhibitions; and it became necessary to suppress them—not so much for the sake of preserving decency as of protecting the drama. But does that reason exist at present? Can any one who has ever by accident attended the smaller houses, assert that the performance and the audience are not of the most decorous and orderly description? So far as that consideration goes, the minor theatres are fully as entitled to a license as the two great theatres themselves; and the original reason, therefore, for suppressing the minor theatres has, amidst the growing good taste and civilisation of the age, entirely ceased to exist. On the other hand, why is a patent granted to two theatres alone? There is but one possible ground—there is but one alleged ground—for the preservation of the dignity of the national drama. Now, how has the patent obtained that object? It happens, curiously enough, that no sooner were the two great theatres in possession of this patent, than the national drama began to deteriorate, and a love for scenic effect to supersede it.

It is a reproach made to Sir Wm. Davenant, it is a reproach made to all the stage-managers under the new patents, that they have always looked, as their chief object in theatrical decoration, to a mechanical improvement. This reproach, with more or less justice, has constantly existed—this reproach, with peculiar justice, exists at the present time. Indeed, it is impossible to look back to the last fourteen or fifteen years without being struck with the extraordinary poverty of intellect which has been displayed in the legitimate drama, compared with that which any other department of literature has called forth. There have been exceptions, very honourable exceptions; but never has any general rule had fewer exceptions; and I am tempted to ask, with the Lord Chancellor, not how many plays have been produced in our literature, but rather, how many plays have been produced fit for grown-up men and women to go and see? When the Legislature has given so vast a privilege to two theatres, solely for one object—viz., the preservation of the dignity of the national drama—it is bound in justice to see if that object has been effected. It is bound in justice to say, "where are the plays to produce and encourage which we gave you this exclusive privilege? Where are the immortal tragedies, where are the chaste and brilliant comedies? You were to preserve the dignity of the drama from being corrupted by mountebank actors and absurd performances; you have, therefore, we trust, driven jugglers and harlequins from the national stage; you have admitted no wild beasts; you have introduced no fire-eaters and sword-swallowers; you have preserved the dignity of the national drama inviolate; you have left it such as it was when you took it from the hands of Ben Jonson or Shakespeare; for if you have not done this, then you have not fulfilled that object for which we took from your brethren those privileges we have intrusted to you." When we look round and behold the dioramas, and the cosmoramas, and the jugglers, and the horses, and the elephants, and the lions, which have been poured forth upon the stage, we cannot but feel that the dignity of the drama has not been preserved, and the object of these patents has not been fulfilled. Seeing, then, that the reason for suppressing the minor

theatres no longer exists, seeing that the object of these patents has not been realised, we are enabled to take a broader view of the question, and to recognise the monstrous injustice that the law inflicts on the public; for is it not absurdly unjust to say to the immense and scattered population of this metropolis, you shall go only to two theatres for the harmless recreation of a play—no matter how remote the habitation of the playgoer—no matter how inconvenient for the purposes of hearing and seeing, the arrangement of the theatre? Paddington and Pimlico, Westminster and the Tower Hamlets, Mary-le-bone and Shoreditch, are all to disgorge their play-going population in the direction of Covent Garden or Drury Lane; where, when they have at last arrived, they will find, not perhaps a tragedy, not perhaps a comedy, but a very fine scene in a very bad melo-drama—or perhaps, if they are in eminent luck, a couple of lions and a diorama by way of keeping up the dignity of the national drama. Is not this, indeed, unjust to the public, whom it deprives of all the numberless advantages of competition? Is it not unjust to the author and the actor, whom it limits to so overstocked and narrow a market? But it may be said that the minor theatres, notwithstanding their illegality, continue to exist, and that this injustice to the public is not, therefore, committed. But does not that fact alone afford sufficient ground for inquiry? The small theatres are liable to serious penalties. They are told that those penalties will be enforced. If enforced, what injustice on the part of the law! If not enforced, what mockery of the law! In either case amendment is necessary. Laws that are iniquitous should be altered; but so also should laws that are impracticable. Why expose the laws to be at once hated for their doctrine and laughed at for their impotence? Why have all sound and fury in the theory, signifying nothing in the practice? Besides, if the law cannot, in the teeth of public opinion, shut up the small theatres, why not let them assume a respectable, a lawful character? What encouragement does it give to the proprietors of the minor theatres for a regular and continued spirit of enterprise, while this uncertainty hangs over their head? What injustice this precarious uncer-

tainty of the law causes! One proprietor breaks the law with impunity. The Lord Chamberlain, however, honours the illegal theatre with his presence—sanctions the illegality by his patronage—and another proprietor, as at this moment is the case, may be suddenly prosecuted and cast into prison for the crime of earning his bread exactly in the same manner as his brethren, but not exactly with the same fortunate impunity. Let, then, these laws be defined, and let them be clear and uniform in their application. Let the public be informed what theatres shall exist, and the actors what performances they shall be allowed to act; and do not let the law keep up iniquitous uncertainty, which, while it renders the property of the minor theatres so precarious and illegal, fritters away by contraband far more than it could by open rivalry, the property of the great theatres—involves them in constant prosecutions, and constant litigations, and makes the public ridicule as impotent, or hate as tyrannical, those who enforce the law, and sympathise as martyrs or heroes with those who defy it. A great cause of the deterioration of the drama, it is universally acknowledged, is to be found in the size of the theatres. It is in vain to expect plays that shall not depend upon show in theatres where it is impossible to hear. The enormous size of these houses renders half the dialogue lost to half the audience, and thus the managers have been compelled to substitute noise, and glitter, and spectacle, and the various ingenuities of foil and canvas, for wit which would be three-parts inaudible, and for pathos which would scarcely travel beyond the side-boxes. It is absurd to hope that the drama can be restored until it is exhibited at houses of a convenient size. But what is the cause of the overgrown size of these theatres? Why, the patents! No sooner were the proprietors of the two great houses in possession of the exclusive right of entertaining the town, than they naturally enlarged their houses, to take in as much of the town as possible. The patents encouraged them to hope for unreasonable profits, and their only care was, to find room for all the new comers whom they thought would be driven into their net—quite forgetful, that though the law might shut up a commodious theatre, it could not force the public to yawn

and shiver in an inconvenient one. But it is said that the proprietors of one, or both, of the large theatres intend to diminish the size of the theatres, and to make them reasonably less: but while that would be a very fair arrangement for one part of the public, would it be fair to the other part? While it would be very fair to those who were admitted, would it be fair to those who were excluded? Would it be fair to the public to say, "You shall go only to two theatres," and then to reduce the size of those theatres, so that only a very small part of the public might be admitted? But, as the size of the houses is diminished, the character of the drama will be elevated—a new impetus will be given to the stage—people will be able to hear and see better—many more persons than at present will be desirous of going, but where are they to go? Exactly at the time that you would increase the number of the frequenters of the theatre, you will diminish the accommodation afforded them. So that the two houses are in this dilemma; either they must retain their present size, and the legitimate drama must continue debased or banished, or they must lessen their size, and commit a greater injustice to the public, exactly in proportion to the greater improvement they make in the stage. No: while we reduce the size of the theatres, in order to restore the drama, we must increase the number of the theatres in order to receive the public. Now there is also another point I will just touch upon—viz., the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, and more especially that of the Dramatic Censor. It may, perhaps, be remembered, that when Sir Robert Walpole brought in the bill, commonly called the Play-house Bill, in which the authority of the Censor was for the first time settled and defined, Lord Chesterfield said, in his celebrated speech on that bill, "That we were about to give to the Lord Chamberlain, an officer of the household, a power more absolute than that which we would extend to the Monarch himself." I am at a loss to know what advantages we have gained by the grant of this almost unconstitutional power. Certainly, with regard to a Censor, a Censor upon plays seems to me as idle and unnecessary as a Censor upon books. Let us look back for a moment; although

until Walpole's Bill the powers of a censorship seem to have been unsettled and doubtful, it is certain, at least, that the Master of the Revels at first, and the Lord Chamberlain afterwards, exercised a right similar to that of a censor. Whole passages in Davenant and in Massinger were expunged by the Master of the Revels. And now mark how really useless, so far as morality was concerned, were the pains he took upon the subject. We know what those passages were; they contained only some vague political allusion, and did not contain a line of the indecencies and immorality that might be found in those plays. And why? Because a Censor sees only with the eyes of his contemporaries, and because the custom and temper of the times sanctioned the indecency and the immorality. The only true censor of the age is the spirit of the age. When indecencies are allowed by the customs of real life, they will be allowed in the representation of it, and no censor will forbid them. When the age does not allow them, they will not be performed, and no Censor need expunge them. For instance, when the Licenser at this moment might strike out what lines he pleases in a new play, he has no power by strict law to alter a line in an old play. The most indelicate plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Wycherly or Farquhar, may be acted unmutilated, without submitting them to the Censor; but they are not so acted, because the good taste and refinement of the age will not allow them; because, instead of attracting, they would disgust an audience. The public taste, backed by the vigilant admonition of the public Press, may, perhaps, be more safely trusted for the preservation of theatrical decorum, than any ignorant and bungling Censor, who (however well the office may be now fulfilled) might be appointed hereafter; who, while he might strain at gnats, and cavil at straws, would be without any other real power than that of preventing men of genius from submitting to the caprice of his opinions. There are two other points for the Committee to consider—viz., the number of theatres that shall be allowed, and the performances they shall be permitted to exhibit. With respect to the first, I will read a short passage from Sir Walter Scott's Life of Dryden, which is applicable in itself, and

emanates from no common authority. "I do not pretend," says Sir Walter Scott, "to enter into the question of the effect of the drama upon morals; if this shall be found prejudicial, then two theatres are too many; but, in the present woful decline of theatrical exhibition, we may be permitted to remember, that the gardener who wishes to have a rare diversity of a certain plant, sows whole beds with the species; and that the monopoly granted to two huge theatres must necessarily diminish, in a complicated ratio, both the number of play-writers, and the chance of anything very excellent being brought forward." Now, I must confess, for my own part, that I think the public likely to be the best judge as to the number of theatres. On the one hand, I do not think there would be more theatres than could find audiences to fill them; on the other hand, I think there ought to be as many theatres as the public are willing to support. With regard to the performances, I do not think it would be wise to lay any restrictions on the legitimate drama; for, putting out of the question the difficulty of defining what the legitimate drama really is—a difficulty that would open the door to new disputes and new litigations—I think it is absurd to allow what is frivolous and to forbid what is great; to allow vaudevilles from the French, and not to allow tragedies from Shakespeare. It is unjust to the public to suffer what is indifferent of its kind, and to forbid what is best of its kind; to allow what might lower and enervate the public taste, and not to allow what might refine and exalt it. I would wish the stage to be left altogether free from such restrictions; and in so saying, I do not ask the House to try any novel experiment—I only ask it to leave the drama such as it was in the days of Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson and Shakespeare, when seventeen theatres were constantly open to a metropolis a tenth part of the size of London at present, and a population by a hundred degrees less wealthy and intellectual. I now come to the last point I will touch upon—viz., the state of the laws regarding dramatic copyright. As we have heard a great deal in this House of the advantage of the close boroughs, in returning to Parliament men of intellectual habits, whom some hon. mem-

bers declare are the representatives of literature, I may ask, what have we done for the literature we represent? The state of the law regarding literary property is infinitely more harsh and inconsistent than that existing in France; but the state of the laws regarding dramatic copyright alone, will long be a proof how indifferent this House has been to the general claims of that property, which ought to be the most sacred of all, because it encourages all—because it ennobles all—because it produces all—the property that is derived from intellectual exertion. The instant an author publishes a play, any manager may seize it—mangle it—act it—without the consent of the author—and without giving him one sixpence of remuneration. If the play is damned, the author incurs all the disgrace; if the play succeeds, he shares not a farthing of the reward. His reputation lies at the mercy of any ignorant and selfish managerial experiment; he may publish a play that he never meant to be acted—that he knows would not bear to be acted; but if, as in the case of Lord Byron, his name alone would attract an audience, he is dragged on the stage, to be disgraced against his will, and is damned for the satisfaction of the manager, and the dignity of the national drama. He has no power—no interest in the results of his own labour—a labour often more intense and exhausting than the severest mechanical toil. Is this, I ask, sir, a just state of things? The commonest invention in a calico—a new pattern in the most trumpery article of dress—a new bit to our bridles—a new wheel to our carriages—may make the fortune of the inventor; but the intellectual invention of the finest drama in the world may not relieve by a groat the poverty of the inventor. If Shakespeare himself were now living—if Shakespeare himself were to publish a volume of plays, those plays might be acted every night all over the kingdom—they might bring thousands to actors, and tens of thousands to managers—and Shakespeare himself, the producer of all, might be starving in a garret! The state of our laws in this respect is scarcely credited in foreign countries. In France, no work of a living author can be performed at any theatre, provincial or metropolitan, without his formal consent, on the penalty of for-

feiting the whole profits to the author. In Belgium, the same law exists, and in both countries the author's family, his widow, his children, succeed to his intellectual property, and for a certain number of years share in its profits. By this a twofold purpose is served; justice is done on the one hand and emulation excited on the other. Shall we, then, be more backward—more unjust than our neighbours; and shall these poor authors who have so much to struggle against, in the common literary calamities of a slender income and a diseased frame, be the only men in the whole community literally denied that necessary blessing pledged by every free State to its subjects—viz., the security of property? I trust I have established sufficient ground for the appointment of a Committee; but, as one of the English public, and as a Member of this House, I am desirous that the age, the nation, and the Legislature may be freed from the disgrace of these laws on the one hand, and this want of law on the other, which are so glaringly unjust in themselves, and so pernicious to one of the loftiest branches of intellectual labour. Sir, I now move for a Select Committee to inquire into the law respecting Dramatic Literature and the performance of the Drama.

III.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 14TH OF JUNE 1832.

ON Thursday, the 14th of June 1832, the Member for Lincoln, Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer, moved the House for a Select Committee to consider the propriety of establishing a cheap postage on Newspapers, and other Publications. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Viscount Althorp, having in the course of the debate which arose thereupon intimated his agreement with the principle of the proposition, the motion was withdrawn. In submitting that proposal to the House the following speech was delivered.

SIR,—In rising to move certain resolutions for the repeal of the principal taxes on knowledge, I trust that my deep and conscientious conviction of the necessity of the measure I am about to propose, will be a sufficient excuse for undertaking a task which, if as important as I believe it to be, is equally above my abilities and my station in public life. Those are not light or ordinary motives which, supporting as I do the present Administration, could induce me to bring forward a measure, not, I trust, opposed, but certainly not sanctioned by them, and which must necessarily be of a nature that it would doubtless better suit their convenience to leave to their own time and their own discretion to determine. But the motives by which

I am actuated have been so long nursed, and are so strongly felt, that I conscientiously believe they leave me no alternative. For, when I look round and see the dangerous effects of those taxes in daily operation; when I see the numberless pernicious and visionary publications which are circulated in defiance of laws, which, having lost the sanction of public opinion (as his Majesty's Attorney-General so justly remarked some time ago), have lost the power of being carried, with prudence, into effect; when I see that, while the cheap dangerous publication is not checked, we have at least suppressed the cheap reply—for those who would reply are honest and well-affected men; and men honest and well-affected will not break, while they lament, that law which at present forbids the publication of cheap political periodicals; when I look round and see the results of that ignorance which the laws I desire to abolish foster and encourage, breaking forth not only in wild and impracticable theories, but, as the experience of a few months since has taught us, in riot, and incendiarism, and crime—when I see them written in the fires of Kent, and stamped in the brutal turbulence of Bristol, I feel that, in this parliament, and at this period of the session, I do but fulfil my duty in pointing out the evils of the present system, and the manner in which, I conceive, they may best be remedied. Can it possibly be said the time is unseasonable for the consideration of any question which relates to national morals and to the waste of human life? Sir, I shall proceed, at once, to call the attention of the House to certain facts, which will tend to show why it is our duty and our policy to diffuse cheap instruction amongst the people, and I shall then show in what manner that instruction is, by the existing taxes, checked and obstructed. From an analysis, carefully made, of the cases of those persons who were committed for acts of incendiarism, &c. &c., in 1830, and the beginning of 1831, it appears that in Berkshire, of 138 prisoners, only 25 could write, and only 37 could read; at Abingdon, of 30 prisoners, 6 only could read and write; at Aylesbury, of 79 prisoners, only 30 could read and write; of 50 prisoners tried at Lewes, one in-

dividual only could read well! Now, when we remember that it is not sufficient to read, but that, to derive any advantage from that ability, there must also be the habit of reading, how small a proportion of these unfortunate men can be said to have possessed any positive instruction! The same connection between crime and ignorance exists in France. In 1830, it appears that in the French courts of assize there were 6962 accused persons. Out of this number 4519 were entirely ignorant of reading and writing, and only 129 had received a superior education. It may be said that, as ignorance and poverty usually go together, it is in these cases the poverty that sinned, while the ignorance is only the accident that accompanies the poverty. But this notion I can contradict from my own experience. My habits have necessarily led me to see much of the condition of those men who follow literature as a profession, and I can say that this city contains innumerable instances, among well-informed and well-educated men, of poverty as grievous, as utter, and certainly as bitterly felt, as any to be found among the labouring population of Kent or Norfolk. Yet how few among these men are driven into crime! How rarely you find such men retaliating on society the sufferings they endure! The greater part of offences are offences against property; but men, accustomed to inquiry, are not at least led away by those superficial and dangerous notions of the injustice of the divisions of property, which men who are both poor and ignorant so naturally conceive and so frequently act upon. The knowledge which cannot, in all cases, prevent them from being poor, gives them at least the fortitude and the hope which enable them to be honest. If, then, it is true, as the facts I have stated seem to me sufficient to prove, that there is an inseparable connection between crime and ignorance, it follows as a necessary consequence that it is our duty to remove all the shackles on the diffusion of knowledge—that poverty and toil are sufficient checks in themselves—that the results of any checks which we, as legislators, voluntarily impose, are to be traced, not only in every violent and dangerous theory instilled into the popular mind, but in every outrage the people ignorantly commit, and every sentence of

punishment, transportation, and death, which those outrages oblige us to impose! It is, then, our duty to diffuse instruction in all its modes. Yet I think it will be scarcely necessary for me to contend that newspapers are among the readiest and most effectual instruments for diffusing that instruction. In the first place, they have this great advantage—they are the most popular. A certain traveller relates that he once asked an American why it was so rare in America to find a man who could not read? The American answered, "Because any man who sees a newspaper always in his neighbour's hand, has a desire to see what pleases his neighbour, and is ashamed not to know what forms the current topics of conversation." In fact, no man can have lived in a city without observing the extraordinary appetite for intelligence on passing events, which the life of a city produces among all classes, from the lowest to the highest; and it has been justly said, that you may note even a greater crowd round a newspaper office, with the day's journal at the window, than at the most alluring of the caricature shops. A newspaper is, in truth, almost the only publication (religious ones excepted) that the poorer classes are ever tempted to read; and, above all, it is the only one in which they can learn those laws for the transgression of which ignorance is no excuse. Thus, it has been well remarked that every account of a trial, every examination at Bow-Street, every dogma of my Lord Mayor, has for them not only an interest and an amusement, but also a warning and a moral. A newspaper, then, is among the most popular and effectual modes of instructing the people. And now mark the interdict laid on the newspapers: the present taxes upon newspapers consist first of a duty of 3d. per pound weight on the paper, or about a farthing a sheet; second of a duty, nominally 4d., but subject to a discount of twenty per cent;* and, third, a tax of 3s. 6d. upon every advertisement. The whole duties, with the price of printing and the news agency, amount to 5½d. for every sevenpenny copy of a

* That is, on the daily, but not on the weekly, papers; the weekly papers paying at the date when this speech was delivered the full duty (4d.) without discount.

London paper. Now, let us glance rapidly at some of the consequences of the high price at which newspapers are sold. In the first place, owing to that price, the instruction they contain does not travel extensively among the poor. In the second place, as only the higher and the middling orders can afford in general the luxury of these periodicals, so it is chiefly to the tastes and interests of those wealthier orders that these journals address themselves. They contain, it is true, much that is valuable, much that is necessary to the poor, but they do not give to them that advice, and those frequent suggestions and admonitions upon matters of trade, or points of law, which would necessarily be the case were the poor among their customary supporters. Even in mere style, that which suits the richer is not always attractive to the poorer people; and thus, as in this free country you cannot prevent men of all ranks from seeking political intelligence, the poorer people, finding themselves debarred from the general use of these expensive papers, and finding, when they do obtain them, that they are not often addressed in a style seductive to them, are driven almost inevitably to those illegitimate, those dangerous productions, cheaper in price, and adapted almost exclusively to themselves. It is thus that the real political education of the people is thrown into the hands of the wildest, and sometimes the most pernicious teachers; and while we are erecting new props and new buttresses to the gorgeous palaces and solemn temples of the Constitution, we are suffering that dark and stealthy current of opinion to creep on, which, if not speedily checked, must sap both temple and palace in the very midst of our labours. I should like honourable Members to know the real nature of publications thus circulated. I will not read any extracts to the House, because I know the House objects to that course: but I deny that there is much justice in the argument that by so doing we should give notoriety to publications otherwise obscure. The fact is, that for the class to which they are addressed they are not obscure. Are honourable Members aware that many of these publications circulate to the amount of several thousand copies weekly? that their sale, in several

instances, is larger than the sale of some among the most popular legitimate papers? that their influence over large bodies of the working classes is much greater? A very intelligent mechanic, in a manufacturing town, with whom I have recently had occasion to correspond, writes to me in one of his letters, "We go to the public-house to read the sevenpenny paper, but only for the news; it is the cheap penny paper that the working man can take home and read at spare moments, which he has by him to take up and read over and over again, whenever he has leisure, that forms his opinions." "You ask me," said another mechanic, "if the 'Penny Magazine' will not counteract the effect of what you call the more violent papers. Yes, in some degree: but not so much as is supposed, because poor men, anxious to better their condition, are always inclined to politics, and the 'Penny Magazine' does not touch upon them. To correct bad politics you must give us not only literature, but good politics." Do honourable Members know the class of publications thus suffered to influence the opinions of our fellow countrymen? I speak not about such as are aimed at mere forms of government: who indeed shall say what opinions on such subjects are pernicious or not? But are honourable gentlemen aware that some of these publications strike at the root of all property, talk of the injustice of paying rents, insist upon an unanimous seizure of all the lands in the kingdom, declare that there is no moral guilt in any violation of law, and even advocate assassination itself! Thus, then, it is clear that the stamp duty does not prevent the circulation of the most dangerous doctrines. It gives them, on the contrary, by the interest which the mere risk of a prosecution always begets in the popular mind, a value, a weight, and a circulation which they could not otherwise acquire. Above all, let it be borne in recollection, that while these are circulated in thousands the law forbids all reply to them—or if, in despite of fact, you call the legitimate papers a reply to them, then, even by your own showing, you sell the poison for a penny, and the antidote at sevenpence. My proposition is not at present to touch the paper duty; it is a tax which, in the present state

of the revenue, may be fairly spared, and which, though a grievance, does not fall nearly so heavily on the public as the two taxes I am desirous of abolishing: the first of these is the stamp duty—the second is the advertisement duty. Take away the stamp duty, and the 7d. paper will fall at once to 3¾d: but I am inclined to believe—and in this I am borne out by many impartial practical men on the subject—that owing to the great increase of sale which the cheapness of the article will produce, the newspapers will be enabled to sell at a much lower rate than 3¾d., and will probably settle into the average of 2d. each. The great point, and the first to consider, is, will the number of newspapers published through the year increase to any very large extent? All my argument rested upon that point—partly as relates to the diffusion of knowledge—partly to the profits of a postage. To me it seems a self-evident proposition that when it no longer requires a vast capital—a capital from between £30,000 and £40,000—to set up a daily newspaper, when it is open to every man of literary talent, with a moderate sum, to attempt the speculation, there will be a great and sudden increase of newspapers. To me it seems equally evident, that when newspapers are so cheap as to be within the reach of almost any man, there will be an enormous addition to the present number of readers—that many who hire a paper now will purchase it*—that many who now take one paper will then take two—that the intelligent mechanic, who now, in every town throughout the country, complains that he cannot afford to purchase a paper, will spare, at least once a-week, his twopence or his threepence from those ale-house expenses he is now induced to incur for the very sake of reading or hearing read the paper he will then be able to buy—that, in short, when a weekly paper shall cost only twopence, there will scarcely be, in this great political community, a single man who can read, who will not be able and willing to purchase one. But I shall rest no part of my case on propositions only—however evident they may seem to me—I will not stir a step

* The hire of a morning paper, for a time scarcely sufficient to read one-half of it, was at the period of the delivery of this speech, 2d.

without the support of facts. Honourable members have often heard of a certain contraband paper, set up by Mr Carpenter, called 'The Political Letter'—it is published at fourpence: of this paper the average sale weekly is 6000 copies. Made sanguine by his success, Mr Carpenter took out a stamp;* and his paper became sevenpence. What was the consequence? Why the paper could no longer exist; from a sale of six thousand copies it fell in the very first week to a sale of five hundred. Surely that is a most important fact: for here is a journal in all respects exactly the same, except in price, but it can sell six thousand copies one week when sold for 4d., and only five hundred the next week when sold for 7d. There has lately been a sensible falling off in the sale of these illegitimate papers. Why? Not from any increased severity of the law—not from any want of political excitement—not, surely, from any great prosperity in trade, which usually deters men from any inflammatory speculations. No, but because of late a great number of penny literary papers have been set up, and these have been found to interfere with and contract the sale of the contraband journals. Now, as literary papers, after all, are not what the poor particularly want, how much more would the sale of these illegitimate journals have been crippled, had some of these innocent literary papers been innocent political ones? But the great sale even of these cheap literary papers ('The Penny Magazine,' for instance, is said to sell 120,000 copies) proves how general is the desire of the people for such periodicals as they can afford to buy, and how great would be the increase of political periodicals, were they made as cheap as my motion would make them. But, besides these proofs that the cheapness of periodicals will incalculably increase their sale, we have the experience of other countries that it actually does. In America a newspaper sells on the average for 1½d. What is the result? Why, that there is not a town in America with 10,000 inhabitants that has not its daily paper. Compare Boston and Liverpool: Liverpool has 165,175 inhabitants;

* Mr Carpenter took out the stamp because he would not continue his publication without one, when a jury had determined that doing so was an illegal act.

Boston had, in 1829, 70,000 inhabitants. Liverpool puts forth eight weekly publications; and Boston, with less than half the population, and with about a fourth part of the trade of Liverpool, puts forth eighty weekly publications! In 1829, the number of newspapers published in the British Isles was 33,050,000, or 630,000 weekly, which is 1 copy for every 36th inhabitant. In Pennsylvania, which had only in that year 1,200,000 inhabitants, the newspapers amounted to 300,000 copies weekly, or a newspaper to every fourth inhabitant! What is the cause of this mighty difference? The cause is plain. The newspaper in one country sells for a fourth of what it sells for in the other. The newspapers in America sell for 1½d., and in England for 7d. From all these facts (to which I could add innumerable others), we have a right to suppose that, if newspapers were as cheap—as they would be, if my object were carried—the number of copies would be prodigiously increased. Thus, information would circulate far more extensively; thus, matters connected with trade, science, and law, would become more familiar; thus, there would be a thousand opportunities for removing those prejudices among the poor which now so often perplex the wisdom and benevolence of legislators. A great number of trades would have journals of their own; a great number of the more temperate and disinterested friends of the people would lend themselves to their real instruction, and, by degrees, there would grow up that community of intelligence between the Government and the people which it is the more necessary to effect at a time when we are about to make the people more powerful. It is thus that Ministers would have it in their power to reply to those honourable gentlemen, who have said the working classes are too ignorant to be trusted with the elective franchise—at the same time that we grant the trust we should dispel the ignorance! Ministers have been told they have created a monster they cannot control. On the contrary, they have won the monster to themselves. Instead of making a ferocious enemy of a gigantic and irresistible power, they have softened it by kindness. Let them, at the same time, enlighten it by know-

ledge! Lord Eldon, on the 29th of November 1830, at the time of the agricultural insurrections, made use of these remarkable words—"Many, very many of the agricultural insurgents are not aware of the criminality they have been led to commit. There could not be an act of greater mercy to the misled and deluded people, than to have the nature and provision of the criminal law explained. I do hope that those learned men who are to be sent into the disturbed districts, will take the trouble of explaining to their deluded and mistaken fellow-countrymen, the law of the land, and the reason of the law, and the reason why it is for their interest and the interest of the community at large that it should remain the law of the land." In those words Lord Eldon did but adopt the principle I am desirous of expressing. But there is this difference between us; Lord Eldon adopted the principle when it was too late! He made the warning go hand-in-hand with the punishment, and he sent the people instructors, and a special commission at the same time. Sir, I have one more argument for urging the immediate adoption of my proposal—one reason for considering it a necessary appendix to Reform—we have passed the Reform Bill. Suppose we do not break the present monopoly of the five or six newspapers, which now concentrate the power of the press, what will be the consequence? Why, this. In a reformed parliament, will not a ministry too entirely depend on some one or two of the most influential newspapers for support? What the close boroughs have been, may not the existing journals become? Do I speak against the respectability of the present press?—No, considering the vast power they possess, the wonder is not that they have so often, but so seldom abused it. Am I, then, opposed to granting that power to the press? Such a notion as that would be nothing less than ridiculous! While types and paper exist, that power must continue. But then, it ought to be a free press, and not a mere monopoly. Every shade of opinion should find its organ. Power should exist, but that power should be a representation, not an oligarchy. Why exchange an oligarchy of boroughs for an oligarchy of journals? But might we not

injure the interests of the existing papers?—Injure their sale? I think we owe too deep a gratitude to their services for any of us willingly to do so. The competition will divide their power, but the cheapened price will increase their sale. If the stamp duty is the pernicious tax I am attempting to show it, what ought we to say of the advertisement duty? Advertisements are the medium of commercial intelligence of sale and barter. The first principle of a statesman is to encourage that intelligence. Yet here are we laying an interdict of 3s. 6d. on every announcement of it. In the excellent letters which the editor of 'The Scotsman' has addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the ill effects of this tax on our commerce is shown by a reference to America, in which country advertising is untaxed. In one year, twelve of the daily papers in New York have published 1,456,416 advertisements. In the same year, the four hundred papers of Great Britain and Ireland published 1,020,000 advertisements: so that there are nearly one half more advertisements published in the twelve daily papers of New York, than in all the four hundred papers of Britain and Ireland, including the London journals. What is the cause of this preposterous disparity? Is it not the price? The price of an advertisement of twenty lines, in a London paper, if published every day throughout the year, will amount, at the year's end, to £202, 16s. In New York, the same advertisement, for the same period, will be £6, 18s. 8d. Is not that a sufficient cause for the difference? Need we look further? May we not call this tax, in the words of 'The Scotsman,' an engine for extinguishing business, and for obstructing and depressing all the various branches of trade? If such is the effect of this duty on our commerce, how does it affect our literature? A book must be advertised largerly in order to sell: advertising is the chief expense. What is the consequence? Why, that, as it costs as much to advertise a cheap book as to advertise a dear one, the bookseller is loth to publish a cheap one. He cares more about the number of pages in your work than he cares for the number of your facts. You tell him of the materials you have collected, and he asks you if he can sell

them for a guinea. This operates two ways: 1st, It degrades literature into book-making; 2dly, It is a virtual interdict upon cheap knowledge. In both ways, the public are irreparable losers; and all for what? For the sake of about £157,000 to the revenues of the wealthiest country in the world! So much, Sir, for the taxes I would repeal.—I now come to that which I would substitute. I do not think, however, that it will be a sufficient argument from the noble lord to say the revenue cannot bear the loss of these taxes, while there is any other conceivable source from which revenue can be drawn. It is not the amount of taxation under which we groan, it is the method of taxing. It is too much, for instance, that we should make knowledge as dear as possible and gin as cheap! that we should choke the sources of intelligence, and throw open the means of intoxication! What volumes in the mere fact that at Manchester there are a thousand gin-shops, and that at Manchester there is not one daily paper! Squeeze, then, new profits from the excise duties, augment the assessed taxes, odious and unwise as those taxes are. *Any* tax is better than the one which corrupts virtue, and the other which stifles commerce. It is not, then, enough to reply that the Government cannot spare these taxes, and therefore, even if my substitute be doubtful, the doubt makes in no way against my main proposition. The plan I would propose is a cheap postage, in the following manner: namely, that all newspapers, poems, pamphlets, tracts, circulars, printed publications of whatsoever description, and weighing less than two ounces, shall circulate through the medium of the general post at the rate of one penny; and if through the 2d. or 3d. post, at one halfpenny. I would also propose that all works under five ounces shall circulate through the same channels, and at a low and graduated charge. The principle of this plan has been already successfully adopted in France and America. In France, we may see how little it operates as a check on the circulation of the metropolitan papers. For, if we look at home, we shall find that from 1825 to 1829 there has been little variation in the number of copies sent from London into the country;

while in France, where the cheap postage is adopted, the number of papers sent daily by post from Paris in 1825 is 25,000 copies; in 1829 it was 58,000 copies; and it is well stated by Mr Chadwick, a gentleman admirably acquainted with these matters, that while, during those years, letters have increased 50 per cent, newspapers have increased more than 80 per cent. Certainly a most important fact, in answer to those who contend that persons will be unwilling to pay a postage, and that such a plan will operate against the diffusion of the metropolitan newspapers. It has been proved to demonstration in fact that there would be a vast increase of papers if only the stamp duty were but once abolished. What might that increase reasonably be supposed to amount to? In America there is one newspaper, weekly, to every fourth person. Suppose one newspaper, weekly, to every eighth person in England. I take that calculation from the reading proportion of our population. The publication of weekly papers throughout the year would then be one hundred and fifty million copies. But the present total number of sheets, weekly and daily, published throughout the year, is thirty millions. So that the increase of weekly papers alone over all now published would be 120 million sheets yearly. Now, the weight of daily papers of the largest size is 88lb. per 1000 copies, which pay a duty of 3d. per lb., or 22s. per 1000 copies (say 20s.); this makes the paper duty £1000 sterling for every million sheets. Now, we find at present that two-thirds of the London papers go by post. Suppose for one moment this ratio to continue with the increased number, the account to the revenue would stand thus:

Postage of weekly papers	£416,666
Extra paper duty for the extra 120 million sheets	120,000
Total . .	£536,666

But this is only for weekly papers; add now all the daily papers —those published twice or three times a-week—the pamphlets —the tracts—the prospectuses—the various publications sent through the post, and if you only calculate these at an equal sum to that produced by the weekly papers, the results will be

more than a million sterling; from which, if you took £300,000 to pay the expenses of carriage, distribution, &c. (a most extravagant calculation), you would still leave more than the profits of the two taxes I am desirous of repealing! A more minute calculation would produce, I am satisfied, even a far higher result. When we remember all the complicated interests, the vast trades, the numerous intellectual wants, of England—that the average talent and enterprise here is at least equal to that in the United States—capital greater, printers' labour cheaper, and that increased appetite for intelligence would be produced by increased freedom in our institutions, is it unreasonable to suppose that the demand for papers might at length equal that in the United States? But there, to every 10,000 inhabitants there is a daily paper, selling at the lowest ratio 2000 copies. Suppose the same in Great Britain and Ireland, and for a population of 24 millions you would have 1440 millions of sheets published yearly. Now, reckoning that two-thirds of these would be transmitted by post, the result would be 4 millions sterling; add extra paper duty of £1,440,000, and the total would be £5,440,000. And now suppose two-thirds of the papers should not go through post—I do not believe they would; suppose not one went through the post—suppose they did away with the postage altogether, still the extra paper duty alone would be £1,440,000—viz., more than double the whole of the two taxes I am asking you to repeal. So profitable, sir, might be the diffusion of information! If knowledge is power to its possessor, its diffusion is wealth to a State. Sir, I come to the last consideration—the method of transmission through the post. In France the plan has been so systematically arranged, that the best way would be to borrow their details. The main machinery is already formed; if extra expenses in distributing should be required, the enormous profits would cover those expenses. And you may readily see what those profits would be to Government by simply ascertaining what they are to an individual speculator. The average weight of the largest-sized daily papers is 88 lb. per 1000 copies; say 90 lb. Now, persons engaged in transmitting luggage by the

swiftest conveyances, compute the charge at 1d. per lb. for every 100 miles; this for 90 lb. would be 7s. 9d., the price of carriage; but the 1000 newspapers, at 1d. each, would be £4, 3s. 4d.—certainly an ample profit to allow for the expense of distribution, which would leave a clear profit, after all the expenses are paid, of £3, 15s. 10d. This, sir, is all I deem it necessary to say of the plan of a postage at present, for my resolution only goes to appoint a committee to consider the propriety of adopting such a plan, and farther details are, therefore, at present unnecessary. I have been the more anxious to submit my calculations on this head to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because at one time it was understood that the noble lord contemplated not the repeal, but the reduction of these taxes. Now, I would consent to a large reduction in the advertisement duty (though I think the total repeal most desirable), but I could conceive no reduction in the stamp duty which would not leave in equal, if not greater force, the obnoxious principle, the tempting premium, and the unjust prosecution. What could be so monstrous in principle as that any tax should be requisite for a man to publish his opinions? A tax on opinions is a persecution of opinion,—it is a persecution of poverty also. If we say that no one shall declare his sentiments without paying a certain sum, and if not being able to afford that sum he yet does publish his sentiments, and is fined (that is, in consequence of his poverty, cast into prison) for the offence, you make war on his poverty, not on his principles. You punish him not for the badness of his principles—you punish him not for the badness of his opinions; but you punish him, because, being poor, he yet dares to express any opinions at all. Is truth confined to the rich? Who were the great fathers of the Church? Could they have expressed their opinions if a tax had been necessary to allow them that expression? We have been monopolising the distribution of other blessings; let us, at least, leave opinion untaxed, unquestioned, unfettered, the property of all men. Sir, I have now nearly finished. I have attempted to show that the stamp duty checks legitimate knowledge (which is morality—the morals of a nation), but encourages

the diffusion of contraband ignorance; that the advertisement duty assists our finances only by striking at that very commerce from which our finances are drawn—that it cripples at once our literature and our trade—that the time in which I call for the repeal of these taxes is not unseasonable—that it would be no just answer that the revenue could not spare their loss, and yet that I am provided with an equivalent which would at least replace any financial deficiency. Do not let us believe that there is anything in the diffusion of information which is hostile to our political security! At this moment, when throughout so many nations we see the people at war with their institutions, the world presents to us two great, may they be impressive, examples! In Denmark, a despotism without discontent—in America, a republic without change! The cause is the same with both—in both the people are universally educated. What consoles mankind for inequality in condition like the consciousness that there is no barrier at least to equality in intelligence? We have heard enough in this house of the necessity of legislating for property and intelligence; let us now feel the necessity of legislating for poverty and ignorance! At present we are acquainted with the poorer part of our fellow-countrymen only by their wrongs, their murmurs, their misfortunes, and their crimes; let us at last open happier and wiser channels of communication between them and us. We have made a long and fruitless experiment of the gibbet and the hulks; in 1825 we transported 283 persons, but so vast, so rapid has been our increase in this darling system of legislation, that three years afterwards (in 1828) we transported as many as 2449. During the last three years our jails have been sufficiently filled; we have seen enough of the effects of human ignorance—we have shed sufficient of human blood; is it not time to pause?—is it not time to consider whether, as Christians and as men, it is our duty to correct before we attempt to instruct? whether, by sentencing to criminal penalties men ignorant both of the nature of the offence they commit and of the penalties to which they are subject, we do not reduce for them all legislation into one great *ex post facto* law? Is it not time to consider whe-

ther the printer and his types may not provide better for the peace and honour of a free state than the jailer and the hangman?—whether, in one word, cheap knowledge may not be a better political agent than costly punishment? Deny my motion, you cannot deny my facts; by these facts alone, and the attention which they have received, I have made no inconsiderable progress towards the attainment of that object I have so dearly at heart.

IV.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 27TH OF FEBRUARY 1833.

ON Wednesday, the 27th of February 1833, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Viscount Althorp, moved the Second Reading of the Bill for the Suppression of Disturbances in Ireland. The member for Lambeth, Mr Charles Tennyson (afterwards the Right Hon. Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt) thereupon moved that the Bill should be read again that day fortnight. A discussion upon this arose which lasted for five nights—the amendment being rejected at its close by 466 votes to 89. The following speech was delivered on the first night of the debate in seconding the amendment.

I SHALL accept the hint of the noble Lord, and take the least dispassionate, if not the most constitutional, view of the argument. I shall leave it to others to oppose these laws, because they are tyrannical and oppressive. I will oppose them on the ground to which the noble Lord invited me, because they will be inefficacious—because they will not obtain the objects for which they are demanded. Hon. Members must not suppose, because I or other English members oppose these laws, that they deny the crimes that exist in Ireland—or that they are unwilling to co-operate with Government in devising some remedy for those offences. What we complain of is—first, that these

powers will not contain the remedy; and, secondly, that even if they did, the remedy will be worse than the disease. I contend that the remedy is worse than the disease: a violation of law is a terrible evil—a suspension of law is a still greater one. It is useless to read a catalogue of crime—that is not the question; prove to us how these laws will be applied to the crime—it is useless to tell us that in the present system there is evil and danger; prove to us that there will be less evil and less danger in the law you demand. I say these laws will not obtain their object: in the first place, what are the crimes for which the noble Lord demands them? Not for ordinary offences—no, for the crime of murder. It is instances of murder that the noble Lord has adduced. Will it be believed that murder is the very crime these laws do not embrace? Your Court Martial is to sit upon capital offences, but can only transport for life. Murder is not a transportable offence. It does not receive, then, its sentence from the Court to be established. You deal only with subordinate offences—you attack the misdemeanour, and you leave the crime. Again, what is the great grievance complained of by the noble Lord in the administration of justice? That the witness dares not give evidence in a Court of law—that a son shrinks from arraigning the murderer of his own father. A terrible proof of the disorder to which a legislation of long and unvaried coercion has brought that unfortunate country. I join in lamenting it—I will join in devising cures for it; but there is no cure for this contemplated in your new powers. The witness would be exposed to exactly the same danger under the Court Martial as in the Court of Law. You may compel him to give evidence by the threat of imprisonment; but when he has given his evidence, how will you protect him? He will be exposed to the same danger—the same, did I say? No, to a much greater danger. For the new tribunal will be more odious than the old; and in proportion to the odium of the tribunal, will be the vengeance against the witness. Oh! but say his Majesty's Ministers, we shall pacify the country, and thereby disarm intimidation, and then the witness will become safe. Before you

have pacified the country, I apprehend that some half-a-dozen witnesess will be shot at, in order, perhaps, to encourage the rest. But pacify the country—pacify it by domiciliary visits, by Court Martials—by——O rare pacification! The right hon. Gentleman has not been to Ireland in vain. He has learnt, at least, the science of practical bulls—he would pacify a country by maddening its people! But what is this tribunal itself? You take away the Court of Law because you say it cannot, under existing circumstances, be a fair Court for the plaintiff. You appoint, in its stead, a Court Martial, which, by no possibility, can be a fair Court for the accused! Sir, I will not say, as my Lord Holland did—my Lord Holland, one of his Majesty's Ministers, upon the proposition of continuing Martial Law in Ireland—I will not, like him, speak of a Court Martial as a Court which, under no circumstances, could be legally adopted —I will not speak of it as a Court governed only by passion and caprice; but I say, on the contrary, that more humane and honourable men than British officers do not exist. Yet, how, with all their high and strict code of opinion—how with that spirit of discipline which with them is a principle of virtue—how is it possible that they can be impartial judges in political offences—in offences of insubordination? If there be a man in the world more proverbially gentle and humane than another, it is Major Wyndham—the defendant in Somerville's memorable case; and if in political offences—offences of even supposed insubordination, passion could lead even such a man to injustice, how can you hope that the same causes will not operate to produce partial bias against peasantry accused of the same offences of political audacity and insubordination to their superiors? But how much more will this unconscious partiality—still more dangerous, because unconscious—be increased by actual events? The military are to assist the police in conflicts with the people, and then they are to judge the people; they are to be in the contest to-day, and on the Bench to-morrow; with all the passions of antagonists, they are expected to have all the moderation of judges. Why, Sir, what sort of tribunal is this! This impartial—this cool—this unbiassed? You say that these

officers are free from the prejudices of the Magistrates. It is an error: it is with the Magistrates—with the provincial gentry, that they will habitually mix. From whom can they, ignorant of the country, take information, but from those persons with whom society brings them into contact? They will see with the eyes of the Magistrates—it is their opinion they will represent, and according to their partialities will they judge. Thus, then—I beg hon. Members to mark this—thus you are about to suspend the Constitution, to inflame all Ireland, to outrage all liberty, for the sake of appointing a tribunal which does not possess the requisite qualities fairly to adjudge the offence —which does not give the necessary protection to the witness— which does not meet the very crimes for which alone you ask us to appoint it. If these laws only touched, only threatened the guilty, I should recoil from so terrific a precedent; but they menace the innocent also. If you suspend the Constitution, you suspend it for all alike—you make no exemptions from the dread ban of general excommunication. You subject the innocent and the guilty alike to spies and informers—to the arbitrary perils of suspicion—to those dark uncertainties of terror in which every man stands in fear of his neighbour. You give temptation to the accusation of private revenge; you give a field to all the mercenary, all the malignant, all the individual motives which are ever brought into operation by the suspension of law, and the insecurity of political freedom. The right of petitioning—is that the right of the guilty alone? Have not the innocent grievances to complain of? If not, why do you pass your remedial measures? Why do you reform the Church? Why do you amend the Jury Laws? Why do you allow that these are but the commencement of more comprehensive redress? You allow there are great grievances remaining, and you take away from those who endure them the simple privilege of complaint. Does that law touch the guilty alone? Does the right of forcibly invading houses by night where you merely suspect the inhabitant—does that touch the guilty alone? When this law was in force before, men turned it to the most fearful purposes; it was not the peasant who was invaded in his own person

—he was outraged in that of his sister or his wife. It was a law that operated not for a trembling landlord, but for the daring violator—not in behalf of the security of property, but against rights still more sacred than even property itself. It is in recollection of this state of things that the Chief Justice of Ireland—a man whom I name with all respect, and an authority of weight, I presume, with the right hon. Gentleman opposite—said, in his address to the jury, that he remembered the date of the summary Insurrection Act, and the still more summary Court-Martial, and that no description could convey an adequate notion of the horrors that then existed. And by whom is it decreed that these horrors, of which no description can convey an adequate notion, are to be revived? By the most liberal and enlightened Ministry that, with respect to the affairs of England, this empire has ever known—by the very men who, in times of greater danger—times not of peace, but of war—not of robberies but of rebellion—stood foremost, and boldest, and loudest, against the enactment of the very laws they now call upon us to pass. We take the time for exercising new coercions at the very moment when, by our new experiment of conciliation, we have virtually declared that seven centuries of coercion have been unavailing. Why, Sir, not embrace the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman? Why not wait to try the result of that experiment? Why not wait to see the consequence of our new measures of Reform? I am sure that no people on the face of the earth can be governed by the system his Majesty's Ministers propose. To-day concession—to-morrow coercion. This quick alternation of kicks and kindness—this coaxing with the hand, and spurring with the heel—this system, at once feeble and exasperating, of allowing the justice of complaint, and yet of stifling its voice—of holding out hopes and fears, terror and conciliation, all in a breath, is a system that renders animals and men alike—not tame, but savage—is a system that would make the most credulous people distrustful, and the mildest people ferocious. Your object is to govern Ireland. I allow it is no easy matter. Wherever a highly civilised people is united under the same Constitution with one less prosperous and less enlightened, the

task of Government is no sinecure. We must, as practical statesmen, in such a case look not only to abstract measures, but to the complex and varied state of those parties on whom the measures must operate. Ireland is divided into two parties—the Protestant aristocracy and the Catholic population. You must govern Ireland by one or the other of these parties, unless, by a happier policy, you can procure the united confidence of both. But the system proposed by his Majesty's Ministers, instead of making friends of either party, makes enemies of the two. By your measures of Church conciliation you offend the Orange aristocracy—by your measures of military coercion, you incense the body of the people—you pass a scythe under your power in both parties—you make one enemy of all Ireland. Can anything be less politic or less statesman-like? You throw away the conciliatory measures—you get the odium for them, and not the gratitude. Do what you will—if you pass these laws, I warn you that it will be in vain. You can never counterbalance, in the opinion of the Irish people, this attack upon the vitals of their freedom. No individual reforms, however salutary, can pacify or content a nation that you rob of its Constitution. It would be much wiser to be consistent in a harsh policy than weak and contradictory in a mild one. If you make these laws, you ought to suit your other laws to them—if the country is in a state to require these powers, it is not in a state to receive the benefits you offer it; it cannot be fit at the same time for an improved code of laws and a Court Martial as a judicial body. It is said that these powers will be placed in merciful hands, and be administered with all the mildness of arbitrary benevolence. But how can his Majesty's Ministers answer even for this? How can they answer for the mercy of their military delegates? Mercy and these laws are incompatible. The mildest administration of such powers would be severe, because their victims will never recognise them to be just. Mercy, too, would be an inhumane policy. If you obtain these powers, exercise no mercy. If you allow the people a hope of escape, you may be sure that they will tempt great dangers to resist so obnoxious a state of law. An unpopular law mercifully ad-

ministered is only an excitement to crime. No, you can show no mercy. The most humane policy will be to gorge the law as expeditiously as possible, so that we may return the sooner to the natural and healing tranquillity of the Constitution. After the reception that has been given to the right hon. Gentleman's disavowal of hostility, it might be useless in me to state, that, however weak and ineffectual my opposition to this Bill may be, it ought, at least, to have this weight—it comes from one who does not oppose his Majesty's Government generally. I do not agree with some hon. Members in suspecting their future policy with regard to England; nor do I agree with other hon. Members in attributing to them dishonest motives with regard to their conduct in Ireland. I support the Government when I conceive them right. I give them the same support when I think their conduct doubtful, for I will then give credit to their intentions, and estimate their difficulties. I oppose them only when I do from my conscience believe and feel them to be dangerously wrong. I would wish, even in this Bill, to meet as far as I can their views and objects. I do not ask you to alter the Bill—only delay the Bill—try what even three weeks will do; if then there is no progress to a better state of things—(I say progress, for you cannot expect more than progress even if you pass the Bill—you cannot cure the evils of centuries in a day),—come down to this House and pass the measure. I do not say, then, that I would ask for no amendment of the detail; but only show me this decorous and honourable reluctance to pass the Act, and I, for one, will, though I may still condemn, no longer oppose the principle. In this haste there is no show of moderation. A bill that changes liberty into despotism is hurried through the Lords in one week, brought down to this House, and you refuse us the delay—the inquiry of a fortnight. With what consistency can this House oppose itself to so trifling a concession? It required two years to amend the Constitution of England. Shall we not wait two weeks before we unmake the Constitution of Ireland. You will lose nothing by delay. Ministers allow that if they obtain this law they will not call it into operation at once; they will not use it unless some neces-

sity demands. Why not let it rest in this House as well as in the hands of the Government? Why should the Ministers rush so hastily into the odious responsibility of this dangerous power? Let it rest, unaltered, unmutilated, in this House; postpone it only from week to week, ready to be passed the instant it is required; passed too with less delay and less acrimony than at present; with much less excuse for prolonged and detailed opposition—much less reluctance in the English Members—much less procrastination—much fewer adjournments and debates—I will venture to say, even from the most indignant of the Irish Members themselves. The same purpose of terror will be answered; the Irish people will equally see this armed law hanging over their heads—they will see what penalty they must incur by crime. Thus perhaps you will obtain all the good that the passing of the law can secure, but without the same actual and formal violation of liberty—without provoking the same exasperation, or incurring the same responsibility. Let us, then, try this experiment—let the Government make this wise pause—they will lose nothing by it; they may gain much. No one can blame them for cowardice, for reluctance, in a little while suspending a law by which the Constitution itself is suspended. In the observations I have made, I have endeavoured to show that these new powers are not effective because they are violent; that they will not constitute an impartial tribunal, nor protect the witness, nor meet the crimes for which they are demanded; that they confound in one blind punishment the innocent with the guilty; and that, forming part of a contradictory and jarring system, they suffice to annihilate the benefits of conciliating one party without the advantage of conciliating the other. This is not all. You desire them to put down the Political Associations as well as those that are combined only for plunder. You may do so, but you will only throw the eruption into the Constitution—you will only destroy the outward sign of the disease by increasing its inward violence. We are the true quellers of agitation, who would give no cause to agitate. We are the true tamers and masters of the learned Member for Dublin, who would take from his hands his only substantial power—the

power of just complaint. You flatter yourselves that under shelter of those laws you will be able, with effect, to apply your remedial measures: it is just the reverse—they will blight all your remedies, and throw their own withering shadow over all your concessions. I do not fear an open rebellion against the armed force and discipline of England; but if you madden the people, it is impossible to calculate the strength of insanity. But I allow that an open rebellion is the least evil to be feared—I fear more a sullen, bitter, unforgiving recollection, which will distrust all our kindness, and misinterpret all our intentions—which will take all grace from our gifts—which will ripen a partial into a general desire for a separate legislation, by a settled conviction of the injustice of this; so that at last the English people themselves, worn out with unavailing experiments—wearied with an expensive and thankless charge—and dissatisfied with a companionship which gives them nothing but the contagion of its own diseases, will be the first to ask for that very dismemberment of the Empire which we are now attempting to prevent. I shall conclude with a very few words, to be found in one of the most splendid orations that adorn our time—I mean the speech of Lord Brougham on the second reading of the Reform Bill. I quote it not as an instance of inconsistency—this question is far too wide to be reduced to the petty criteria by which individuals are acquitted or defended. I quote it only as an instance of that large and Catholic wisdom which is applicable to all circumstances and all times. In answer to some observations which had been directed against political associations, Lord Brougham said, "Those portentous appearances, the growth of later times—those figures that stalk abroad, of unknown stature, and strange form—unions, and leagues, and musterings of men in myriads, and conspiracies against the Exchequer—whence do they spring, and how come they to haunt our shores? What power engendered these uncouth shapes — what multiplied the monstrous births, till they people the land? Trust me, the same power which called into frightful existence, and armed with resistless force, the Irish Volunteers of 1782—the same power which rent in twain your

empire, and conjured up thirteen republics—the same power which created the Catholic Association, and gave it Ireland for a portion. What power is that? 'Justice denied the right of petitioning—rights withheld—ay, Trial by Jury—wrongs perpetrated—yes! domiciliary visits!—the force which common injuries lend to millions. This it is that has conjured up the strange sights at which we now stand aghast! And shall we persist in the fatal error of combating the giant progeny, instead of extirpating the execrable parent? Good God! Will men never learn wisdom, even from their own experience?" From their own experience! I repeat the interrogatory of Lord Brougham, and I add, will you not learn wisdom from the speeches of Lord Brougham himself. He added, "Nor can you expect to gather in any other crop than they did who went before you, if you persevere in their utterly abominable husbandry, of sowing injustice and reaping rebellion."

V.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 22D OF MAY 1834.

ON Thursday, the 22d of May 1834, the Member for Lincoln, Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer, moved in the House :—

"That it is expedient to repeal the Stamp Duty on Newspapers at the earliest possible period."

After a good deal of discussion the House was divided, when the motion was rejected by 90 votes to 58. On bringing forward his resolution the following speech was delivered.

SIR,—The great pressure of business in the last Session, and a variety of those incidents which so often and so unexpectedly start up in the way of any independent Member bringing forward a motion in this House, has obliged me to defer the question now before the House from time to time until this evening. I am at length enabled, however, to fulfil a pledge which I gave to the country, and a duty which I owe to myself: I am not sorry for the delay—truth never loses by delay. The question is not now what it was when I first introduced it to this House —a new question, coldly agitated without, supported only by the inquiring and speculative few, and screened from the eyes of the people by a variety of other objects, more clamorous and

more exciting. Since then it has been taken up throughout the country; it has been made a test of principle at the general election; and if hon. Members remember this evening the wishes of their constituents and their own pledges, I shall not fear the result of the decision to which they are about to come. Let the House consider, then, the small amount of the tax; let it listen patiently to the statements and the facts I shall adduce as to the substitute I propose; let it remember the importance attached to the subject in the last election; count the number of petitions that have been presented to the House from every large town throughout the kingdom; and then, as an additional argument in favour of the motion, recollect that it has obtained favour and support throughout the country without any encouragement from the newspapers (the greater part of which naturally incline to a tax which confers the monopoly and the market upon themselves), without the excitement of tumultuous meetings or inflammatory harangues. It is from the quiet and deep heart of the people themselves that has come forth the prayer I am now supporting for the free circulation of opinion—for the enlarged and the untaxed diffusion of knowledge, not of politics alone, but of the debates of this very Assembly—of the proceedings of the Courts of Law—of the affairs of foreign states, and of that vast miscellany of information connected with a thousand branches of utility and morals which newspapers furnish to the world. And when the people themselves come forward, even amidst the pressure of financial distress, with this generous and hearty desire for their own intellectual improvement, I know of no popular request which is more worthy the character of a great nation—which ought to be more gladly welcomed by a Representative Assembly, or more frankly acceded to by an enlightened Government. When the noble Lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, brought forward his budget last year, I was surprised to hear no less a person than the right hon. Baronet, the member for Tamworth, observe, in excuse for the noble Lord in repealing the stamp duty upon newspapers, that he believed the newspapers were not loudly complaining of the burthen they endured—that they seemed tolerably con-

tented with the imposition, and would probably be acquiescent in its continuance. The right hon. Baronet was cheered in that remark, and, therefore, there must be hon. Members in that House who supposed, what I can scarcely believe the right hon. Baronet unaffectedly supposed, that the stamp duty is a tax of which only the existing newspapers have a right to complain. Why, did any one ever hear of any monopolists complaining of a monopoly? When the House opened the trade of India, was it the East-India Company that insisted upon a repeal of their charter? This tax is a charter to the existing newspapers—it is not they who suffer from it—it is the public—it is the Government—it is order—it is society that suffers! Just let the House consider—the stamp and paper duties, with the price of printing and the news-agency, amount to 5½d. for every 7d. copy of a newspaper. The consequence of this heavy taxation is this, the capital required to set up a newspaper (what with the expense of reporting, of acquiring foreign intelligence, &c.) is so enormous as to be estimated for a morning paper at from £30,000 to £40,000; this extravagant demand frightens away new competitors, and thus the papers already established enjoy a monopoly. They are quite contented to pay a heavy tax which secures to themselves the public market, and are naturally eager to resist a repeal of the burthen which would immediately surround them with a crowd of rivals. The existing papers, therefore, do not suffer by the tax; but I will tell the House who does—the people suffer, and that to an extent which few men have sufficiently considered. In the first place, the high price of the legal papers prevents, in a great measure, their reaching the poor—I mean the operative and the mechanic. What is the consequence? why this, it is an axiom in our excise legislation, that whenever a commodity is taxed above fifteen per cent, smuggling necessarily ensues. But you tax the newspaper more than 100 per cent; and the result is, the enormous circulation of all manner of contraband publications. The writers in these papers can scarcely be well affected to the law, for they break the law; they can scarcely be reasonable advisers, for they see before them the penalty and the prison, and write under the

angry sense of injustice; they can scarcely be safe teachers, for they are excited by their own passions, and it is to the passions of a half-educated and distressed population that they appeal; in fact, I have seen many of these publications—nothing could be more inflammatory or dangerous. One paper takes a particular fancy to the estates of the Duke of Bedford—another paper has been remarkably anxious for the assassination of the Duke of Wellington (a laugh). Gentlemen may laugh at these notions; they are contemptible enough to us, but it is not to us that they are addressed; they are addressed, week after week, to men who have not received any education, and whom poverty naturally attaches to the prospect of any violent change. These notions might be easily controverted; they might be scattered to the wind, for the English operative would listen to reason, or he would not ask you to repeal this tax; but the Legislature will not allow them to be controverted—will not allow them a reply—they never are replied to—the legal newspapers (addressing a higher class of readers) do not condescend to notice them; even if they do, the cheap newspaper is read where the dear one does not penetrate. You either forbid to the poor by this tax, in a great measure, all political knowledge, or else you give to them, unanswered and unpurified, doctrines the most dangerous. You put the medicine under lock and key, and you leave the poison on the shelf. You do not create one monopoly only, you create two monopolies—one monopoly of dear newspapers, and another monopoly of smuggled newspapers. You create two publics; to the one public of educated men, in the upper and middle ranks, whom no newspaper can, on moral points, very dangerously mislead, you give the safe and rational papers; to the other public, the public of men far more easily influenced—poor, ignorant, distressed—men from whom all the convulsions and disorders of society arise (for the crimes of the poor are the punishment of the rich)—to the other public, whom you ought to be most careful to soothe, to guide, and to enlighten, you give the heated invectives of demagogues and fanatics. I might stop here and say that I have made out my case. What more need be said to prove that this is a tax that ought to be repealed?

What greater curse can a Government bring upon itself than that which it must experience if it permits the circulation of the most dangerous opinions and suppresses the reply to them? Of what greater crime can a Government be guilty than that of allowing the minds of the poor to be poisoned?—than that of pandering to their demoralisation?—and, if demoralisation leads to guilt, and guilt to punishment, of encouraging the wanton sacrifice of human life itself? When it is said that, if we open the market to cheap papers, all kinds of trash will be poured in, those who say it are not aware of the trash that now exists, that is now circulated in defiance of laws, of fines, and of jails. During the present Administration, from 300 to 400 persons have been imprisoned for merely selling unstamped publications in the streets—have been punished with the utmost rigour—sent to herd with felons and the basest outcasts of society; and what has been the consequence? Have we put down the publications themselves? No! We had only raised their authors into importance among that part of the population they address; and, instead of silencing fanaticism, we have exalted the fanatic into the martyr. If there is one true axiom in the world, it is this—that opinion only can put down opinion; and if bad doctrines are afloat, we can only refute them by the propagation of good doctrines, and, therefore, it was wisely said the other day by a noble Lord (the Secretary of State for the Home Department) in answer to Lord Winchilsea, who urged him to prosecute the unstamped publications, "that prosecution might only give them a double publicity." But in what a condition, then, are the Government placed? They leave a law on their Statute-book to which they dare not apply—a law which, when dormant, gives a monopoly to the disaffected; and when exerted, only feeds still more the disaffection. If we do not use it, we are injured; if we do use it, we are injured doubly. We are like a man who keeps a bull-dog so fierce that it is good for nothing; it worries both friend and foe; when chained, the robber escapes; when let loose, it turns upon its master. And a worthy task it is for the Minister of England to be waging this petty war with bill-stickers and hawkers! To let the paper

itself go free, to pounce upon the man who sells it—to level the thunders of the law upon some ragged itinerant, some pedlar of the Press, and then skulk behind the Stamp-office Commissioners, and say, "They did the deed—it is not we who prosecute—it is our agents at the Stamp-office." Miserable subterfuge!—pitiful excuse! The Ministers have the law in their own hands; and they are answerable for every prosecution instituted in the name of the law. But how much worse is it, how much more indefensible, if they who attack cheap knowledge are themselves the members of a society for the diffusion of cheap knowledge! If it is with a penny magazine in one hand that they attempt to strike down the penny newspapers with the other, it is carrying into the State the jealousies of trade; it is saying, "We will give you information; but whoever else gives it to you, him we will punish and destroy; we will tell you about animals and insects, and give you pictures of ruins and churches, with all such infantine trumpery—the hobbyhorse and rattle of education; but whoever unfolds to you the secrets of your laws, the machinery of your State, the mighty events that inspire the age and animate the world, him we have the Stamp Commissioners to prosecute, and the laws of our Reformed Parliament to condemn." But then comes an important question—if newspapers are allowed to be cheap, shall we have good doctrines propagated in answer to the bad? I have every authority for saying we shall. [Here the hon. Member quoted a speech of Dr Birkbeck, in which he mentioned that Dr Arnold of Rugby, Dr Whately of Oxford, and other men of high eminence, were willing to instruct the poor on matters of trade and political economy, &c., if the stamp duty were removed.] In fact, we may perceive by the sale of the 'Penny Magazine,' and of Chambers's excellent 'Edinburgh Journal,' that the poor have a disposition to instruct themselves, if the instruction be only placed within their reach. Nay, what to others seems most dry is often to them most interesting, for the poor live by labour and by trade, and all that enlightens them as to the direction of labour and of trade has a charm, and even an amusement, which the gentlemen of this House are scarcely able to comprehend. In looking to France,

where newspapers are so cheap in comparison to ours, and yet where a much smaller proportion of the poor are educated, we cannot but observe, 1st, that a much larger number of the eminent men of that country are engaged in instructing the people through the medium of the Press; and, 2d, the difference in the number of journals in the two countries devoted to solid instruction upon useful points. Besides its political papers, Paris has ten journals devoted to advertisements, judicial notices, and commercial announcements; twenty journals devoted to jurisprudence, eight to education, twenty-one to science, and twenty-two to medicine. Who can doubt that these are of the most eminent advantage to the people? Who can assert that this country, embracing a much larger reading public, would not have, at least, an equal number, if newspapers were equally cheap, and it were permitted, by the intermixture of news, to attract the poor to the graver portions of the journal? But the advantage of cheap newspapers is not only in giving to the poor such instruction as the newspapers might contain; but it is even greater in habituating the minds of the poor to read and to apply themselves to information generally. It is a remarkable fact, that nearly all the popular reading-societies in the kingdom are first formed by the desire to read the newspapers. In a part of the evidence on the late Poor-Law Commission, one very intelligent witness being asked if he did not think the 'Penny Magazine' had been useful in giving an intellectual bias to the poor, answered, "Undoubtedly; but I think cheap newspapers would do much more good, in training their minds to the desire of reading, and paving the way for general information." Thus, then, the advantages of cheap legal newspapers are, first, that to every bad opinion a good opinion (the natural effect of competition) is opposed—that the poor obtain all the instruction that newspapers contain—that they are thereby stimulated to seek other information of a more solid kind; and I might add that by newspapers alone they learn the nature of the laws and the punishments of crime. This, then, is a tax operating in favour of bad opinion and against good opinion—operating against information, not of politics only,

but of laws; not against knowledge only, but virtue; it gives perquisites to the jailer and fees to the hangman; sowing the seed in ignorance, that they may reap the harvest in crime! The noble Lord allows it to be a bad tax, yet he does nothing to repeal it! Shame on the Reformed Parliament, if it sanction these laws any longer! When I look round this House, and observe the apathy with which hon. gentlemen listen to this subject, I cannot withstand drawing this parallel. In the worst times of modern France, with a Bourbon on the throne; with a Villèle in the administration, when it was proposed by a despotic Government to a servile Chamber to tax the press in France as it is now taxed in England, in order to prevent the circulation of knowledge, and to put down by the tax-gatherer the enlightenment they dared not assail by the soldier, the whole Chamber, subservient as it was, rose against the proposal! They would not war upon knowledge! Are Englishmen less free or less enlightened, that they can support, with patience, that which in the French Chamber was rejected with indignation and scorn? In the remarks I addressed to the House in the Session before last, I proved, I cannot but think, to the satisfaction of the noble Lord, that, both by the evidence in this country, and that through Europe generally, we find that ignorance and crime universally go together; and that, on examining the education of felons committed to jail and sentenced to transportation or death, the vast majority of criminals possess not even the elementary knowledge of reading or writing. This fact has been universally borne out by the evidence on secondary punishments —on the Poor-Laws Commission—on the Sabbath Committee; and if this, then, be true, I tell the noble Lord that it is not enough to improve the laws, to amend the representation, if he continue taxes which he himself acknowledges are a premium to ignorance, and through ignorance the avenue to death. It is said that the schoolmaster is abroad; I can see his rod, but not his books. We seem to reverse the old story of Dionysius; the tyrant has not become a schoolmaster, but the schoolmaster has become a tyrant. When Louis XVI. was condemned to the scaffold, his defenders besought the judges to recollect by how

small a majority that unfortunate monarch was condemned. "True," replied the judges, "but it is by a small majority that the most important decrees are enacted," "Yes," said one solitary voice in that assembly; "but decrees, if unjust, can be repealed; but the life of a man can never be restored." So I say to the noble Lord: if, in his high capacity of Minister of State, he commits some error in mere legislation, the error can be retrieved; but if, after being duly warned, he suffers one peasant's mind to be misled, and one peasant's life lost, by the darkness and demoralisation of these laws, he commits a fault which cannot be atoned—a bad law may be repealed, but the life of a man can never be restored. I will say no more of this tax itself, but I will come at once to the substitute I propose for it. I propose to repeal the stamp duty on newspapers altogether; and, in the first place, I suggest the propriety of laying a cheap postage, not upon newspapers only, but upon all tracts, periodicals, and works of every description under a certain weight. I propose that this postage shall be equal, whatever may be the distance, so that the remote parts of the country may possess the same advantage in obtaining knowledge as those immediately in the vicinity of the metropolis; and, therefore, requiring information less. I do not know that on this point I could add much to the calculations that I had the honour to submit to the House in the Session before last. I beg leave to say that those calculations have never been to my knowledge contradicted or impugned. The debate was very widely published; several thousand copies were circulated; it was submitted to many practical men. Yet despite this publicity, despite the notice it received generally from the Press, no contradiction was given to the facts I then urged. I have, therefore, a right to assume, until such contradiction is made and proved, that my calculations were correct. In America, owing to the absence of this tax, newspapers are so numerous, that there is one weekly paper to every fourth person. I will only take half that proportion for this country. I will suppose, that if we abolish this tax, there will be a weekly newspaper only to every eighth person. The result will be, for the popula-

tion of Great Britain and Ireland, 150,000,000 sheets of weekly newspapers throughout the year. Now, two-thirds of the London papers (it appears by the Returns) are sent at present through the post. Suppose, for one moment, that this ratio continued with the increased numbers, what will be the amount at 1d. postage? Why, the amount will stand thus:—Postage of weekly papers, £416,666. But this is for weekly papers only. Now, calculate the daily papers, and those published two or three times a-week; calculate also the tracts, the prospectuses, the pamphlets, sent through the post, and reckon all these only at as much again; the total would be £833,332—that is to say, the produce will be just double the amount of the tax I now ask you to repeal, and this calculation is formed upon the supposition that the newspapers in this country, if as cheap as those in America, will yet be only, in proportion to the population, one-half of the number of the American papers. And this must be allowed to be a moderate calculation, when it is considered that capital is greater in this country, that printers' labour is cheaper, and that everywhere the appetite for knowledge, even among the poorest part of the people, is on the daily increase. But the noble Lord made, on a former occasion, one objection to this plan: he argued, that since the newspapers would be sold without the charge of postage in London, the effect of the plan would be to tax the provinces for the benefit of the metropolis. With all due submission to him, I think he there suffered himself to be led away by a commonplace fallacy. In the first place, a postage is not a tax upon newspapers, it is the price of carriage; it is the necessary result of living at a distance from town, that the carriage of anything must be paid for, not newspapers only, but books, luggage, parcels of all descriptions. This is the unavoidable consequence of situation; and you might just as well call it a tax to charge a man for the carriage of coals from Newcastle to London, as call it a tax to charge a man for the carriage of a newspaper from London to Newcastle. In the second place, if it be thought a hardship to pay a penny for a newspaper in the shape of postage, how much greater is the hardship to pay 4d. in the shape of duty! If

you dislike to tax the provinces a penny, ought you not to dislike much more to tax them 4d.? or did you fancy, that when the cost was one-fourth part of what it is at present, that the people will acquire an additioual right to complain? Besides it will, in effect, weigh pretty evenly on both the metropolis and the large provincial towns, for, at present, not one large manufacturing town can afford a daily paper. Take away the tax, and every large town will have its paper—a paper of its own, at all events, the town would enjoy without the burthen of postage; and in the large towns, many papers will be devoted to particular branches of commerce or trade, which will be important to those who live in the metropolis, so that if many papers are sent from London, many also will be sent to it. Thus, then, by the postage alone, and according to a moderate calculation, I have attempted to prove, that we should receive double the amount of that trumpery tax; I have endeavoured to prove also, that the only objection against it is fallacious. But that I may not seem wedded to any particular plan, I will now, if the noble Lord wishes it, concede to him all he could desire; I will suppose that the postage of newspapers will not bring in what is expected; I will suppose that it brings in nothing, but merely covers its expenses—nay, I will throw the whole scheme aside altogether. Well, I should even then be on equally strong ground, for by the mere removal of this tax, three other sources of revenue suddenly arise; the first, indeed, depended also upon the plan of postage—I mean the profits arising from the postage, not of newspapers, but of all light works under a certain weight, all tracts, circulars, &c. I do not think the noble Lord is aware of what an immense source of revenue this may become. In the first place, look at all the religious tracts that will be circulated if they may be sent to every part of the country at one penny each! Look at the number of societies of every description, scientific, trading, moral, religious, that will correspond by such circulars! Observe at public sales alone the expenses sustained in advertising! Every auctioneer, every Robins of the rostrum, will send forth circulars announcing the treasure he is about to dispose of.

Take the prospectuses of booksellers alone. In a very able Letter which has been addressed to the noble Lord by Mr Whiting, head of a respectable printing establishment, in the support of postage for light works, he calculates that of publishers' prospectuses (if they come within the weight admissible) 2000 postages will be created daily. Another source of revenue by simply repealing that tax, will arise from the great increase of advertisements. Most of the newspapers set up will obtain some advertisements, more or less—some of them will probably be devoted to peculiar trades and callings, and into such papers a vast increase of advertisements connected with those trades and callings will be poured. At present the reduction of the advertisement duty is not so profitable to the public as it ought to be, because the monopoly of the London papers enables them to keep up a disproportionably high price on advertisements. The effect of a vast competition will be, to lower the proprietor's profit on advertisements, to make advertisements considerably cheaper, considerably more plentiful, and, therefore, while most advantageous to the public, most profitable also to the revenue. But the principal source of profit that will arise to the Exchequer from the mere repeal of this tax, is in the increase of the paper duty alone, and this, I am persuaded, will be so enormous as of itself to do more than compensate to the revenue. Just let the House compute what the increase of the paper duty will be. I suppose that you abolish the tax, and make papers as cheap as they are in the United States; we shall then have—shall I say—as many?—newspapers in proportion to the population. No, let us suppose only half as many as there are in the United States. There, to every 10,000 inhabitants, there is a daily paper, selling at least 2000 copies. I will suppose that in Great Britain and Ireland there is a daily paper to every 20,000 inhabitants, selling at the same proportion. What in that case would be the result? Why, for a population of 24,000,000 you would have 720,000,000 sheets of paper published yearly. Now, then, papers pay a duty of 22s. per 1000 copies—let me say 20s.—that is £1000 for every 1,000,000 papers; the produce in that case will be £720,000

for the paper duty of the 720,000,000 papers; but at present there are only 30,000,000 papers published throughout the year —that is, the profit they yield to the paper duty is only £30,000. Deduct that £30,000 from £720,000, and there remain for the extra paper duty, for the new profit to the revenue, £690,000, or about £150,000 more than the whole profit of the tax I am asking you to repeal. So that I can now say to the noble Lord, "Throw aside, if you please, the plan of the postage; believe, if you like it, that not a paper will be sent to the post; believe that not a pamphlet, a tract, or a circular, but what will be sent by the coach at the charge of 1s., rather than by the post at the charge of 1d. Suppose, too, that not a single advertisement will be obtained by any of the newspapers, and that the advertisement duty remain the same, and yet, by the increase of the paper duty alone, you will gain £150,000 more than the present tax, which you allow to be a barrier to knowledge and a premuim to immorality." Have I made out my case? Is it necessary to say anything further? One or two observations alone remain. In the first place, I shall propose my resolutions in the most moderate and general terms possible. I shall merely propose to repeal the stamp duty on newspapers at the earliest possible opportunity. I shall say nothing about the postage (I have merely thrown that out as a suggestion); the certain substitute to the revenue in the repeal of the tax itself is the increased amount of paper duty, and I am unwilling that any man objecting to a postage shall pretend thereby to excuse himself from voting against the tax upon knowledge itself. If the resolution be carried, the noble Lord will not be put to any immediate inconvenience; it will only establish the principle, which the next Session will suffice to carry into effect. When the hon. member for Bath last Session brought forward his motion for National Education, what was the reply made by the noble Lord to his hon. friend? "I doubt," said he, "if a Government should establish education. Its duty ought to be not to enforce knowledge, but to give every facility to knowledge." I now call upon the noble Lord to discharge that duty upon the principle which the noble Lord himself then laid down. I call upon the noble

Lord to give every facility to knowledge,—I call upon the noble Lord to remove the tax because it is the great national obstacle to knowledge. I am no alarmist; I do not behold a storm in every cloud, or a revolution in every change. A great nation is not easily made, and a great people are not easily undone. But oppressed as we are with financial difficulties—old and new principles at war—the elements of our legislative constitution almost at open discord with each other,—it is above all things necessary that whatever changes may be forced by the multitude upon their rulers, shall emanate from their enlightenment and not from their passion or their blindness. If there is a spectacle which all true patriots, all statesmen of large views, behold with exultation or delight, it is the gradual rise of a great people into power by the necessary and safe consequence of knowledge alone. But if, on the other hand, there is one prospect from which all honest men recoil with dread, it is, in times of difficulty and trouble, the advance of the giant force of a democracy from whom the opportunities of knowledge have been carefully excluded; who, therefore, have only the stimulus of want, without the perception of relief, and who are exactly calculated to frustrate the objects of liberty, because they are impatient of restraint. I call upon the noble Lord to preserve us from that danger—I call upon the noble Lord to fulfil the pledge which his public character, for nearly thirty years, has given to the country in favour of his attachment to the diffusion of knowledge—I call upon the noble Lord to be alive to the high ambition worthy his principles and his name—to open the prison-house of the mind—to remove the fiscal chains that now fetter and cramp opinion—and finding knowledge the monopoly of the rich, to leave it the inheritance of the poor. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the following resolution:—"That it is expedient to repeal the Stamp duty on newspapers at the earliest possible period."

VI.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 21ST OF AUGUST 1835.

ON Friday, the 21st of August 1835, the Member for Lincoln, Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer, pursuant to notice, moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider the question that for the more general diffusion of knowledge it is expedient that the Stamp Duty on Newspapers be reduced to One Penny. During the discussion which ensued the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Viscount Althorp) having pledged himself to repeal the tax, if the revenue could bear it, the motion was withdrawn. On bringing forward his resolution the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—I can assure the right hon. gentleman that I am exceedingly glad of the delay that has taken place in the bringing forward of this motion. I am exceedingly rejoiced at the conversation which has just taken place, and which, I am satisfied, will be hailed with the greatest pleasure by the country. I am also glad that my motion has been delayed until so many and so respectably-signed petitions have been presented in favour of it. The present motion is not a novel one, as on two former occasions a similar one has been brought forward, and therefore I can assure the House that I will not occupy its time for more than a few moments. I am sure the right hon. gentleman (the Chan-

cellor of the Exchequer) will acquit me of the least desire to embarrass the Government. I have supported the Ministers out of power humbly, zealously, but disinterestedly ; but I support them with still greater pleasure now that they are in power, because hitherto they have nobly justified the grounds on which I desired their restoration to office, and never, I believe, more than by their speeches of this evening. That considerable excitement prevails upon this subject throughout the country, it is in vain to deny. I will appeal to the member of any manufacturing town, and ask him if the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowlede is not one of the most popular demands among his constituents? I have looked at the Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, and I find that the number of petitions presented upon this subject, during the present session, greatly exceed the number in favour of Municipal Reform, and are double the number praying for the abolition of tithes. More, in fact, have been presented praying for the repeal of this than have been presented for the repeal of any other tax. The right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other day, with great propriety and great eloquence, that he would not consent to purchase popularity upon false and unreal grounds ; but I would ask the right hon. gentleman one question—What has made the real, lasting, and merited popularity of the present Government? Has it not arisen from their consistent advocacy of liberty of opinion? In Catholic Emancipation—the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—in Parliamentary and Municipal Reform Bills? This has been the main principle of their policy, and it has had its reward. Is it, therefore, on unreal grounds that I ask of my right hon. friend to repeal this tax? The Ministers have given voice to opinion, and that voice has supported the power which created it. All I ask of my right hon. friend is, to give the same liberty of opinion to writing which he and those associated with him have obtained their influence and reputation by giving to speech and action. The whole expression of public opinion, in a periodical shape, is at present confined to the narrowest oligarchy that ever disgraced a free country. No man can publish a newspaper—that is, no man can write periodically upon the news of

the day, or the debates in Parliament, or any domestic or foreign affairs, without paying fourpence upon every sheet in the shape of a tax. The result is, that the legal market is altogether confined to great capitalists and exclusive monopolists, while a large and cheap market is opened to smugglers. I am aware that if you take away the whole duty, papers such as the 'Times' will still require an immense capital; but still a number of papers, upon a thousand subjects interesting to the great bulk of the population, will be published, which will not require so much capital. It is perfectly absurd to see only five or six morning papers for the active, thoughtful, and stirring population of this country. This is not the case in America, where a single district supports as many morning and evening papers as the whole of England. But I need only refer to England itself to show the operation of this tax. In 1792 there were thirteen morning and twenty evening papers published in London — although at that time the population numerically must have been much less, and the reading population not one-half what it is at present. It is absurd to talk about the liberty of the Press in England so long as the taxes on knowledge continue as at present—it is in vain to make holiday speeches about it saying, "it is the very air we breathe, and if we have it not we perish," when the Press is the only means of expressing the opinions of which the condition is a large capital and the result a severe monopoly. It has been urged that if the newspaper press is rendered cheap, it will become bad and worthless, and that if the market is widened, the commodity will be deteriorated. Why, if this argument were used as to any other article of trade, a man would be set down as an idiot. If a dozen persons only were allowed to sell spectacles, and a proposition was made to allow every person to sell them, would not the statesman who told you that in that case spectacles would be good for nothing, deserve to be laughed at? The analogy holds good with everything—the greater the competition the greater the chance of excellence, and the wider the market the better the commodity. But this truth obtains more with respect to literature than anything else. Does the history of literature tell you that a man writes well in proportion as he

is wealthy, and that the extent of his knowledge or genius is in proportion to his stock in the three per cents? I am afraid you will find that the reverse is the fact. If a tax of 200 per cent, which is that now imposed upon newspapers, were placed upon any other species of literature, it would long since have put an extinguisher upon all the best literature in the country. What extinguished the 'Spectator'? Was it not the tax of one penny? The eloquence of Addison and the wit of Steele could not make head against a penny tax. How many 'Spectators' in politics of equal talents may you not have extinguished by a tax of four times the amount? I will ask my right hon. friend what difference is there between political periodical writing and any other writing? Are they not subject to the same laws—created by the same intellect—influenced by the same competition, and improved by the same causes? There is only this difference between them, that political, and particularly periodical political writing, is much more generally useful and important than any other description. If I was a poor man, and had not read the 'Rambler,' or the 'Spectator,' or Shakespeare, or Milton, I do not well see how I should stand a greater chance of being imprisoned, or transported, or hanged. But were I a poor man, and did not read the newspapers—if I did not know what new laws were passed surrounding me with punishments—if I did not know what was legal and what was illegal—I should be liable to suffer through ignorance, and thus this tax of fourpence which keeps numbers of persons from obtaining the more useful knowledge, subjects them to crime and exposes them to the gallows. I can compare the system to nothing but the monstrous tyranny of shutting men up in a dark room, and declaring that they shall be severely punished if they stumble against the numerous obstacles by which they are surrounded. I confess I do not share in the feelings entertained by some hon. Members against the present newspaper press. Where a great power exists it is sometimes abused, but the wonder appears to me to be that its powers have been so seldom abused. I hope I have shown that I am above the meanness of flattering or fawning upon this formidable engine of praise or censure, by having

been the first person to bring forward a substantive motion for the repeal of the existing monopoly; and therefore it is that I think I may be allowed to bear witness to the talent, respectability, character, and accomplished education of the great mass of the gentlemen connected with the periodical press. I use this, not as a compliment, but as an argument in favour of my motion. It is precisely because the press is thus able and excellent that we ought to extend its advantages as widely as possible. Can any one suppose that these gentlemen will write worse when they have a larger community to address? But it is said, "if they write for the multitude they must pander to their base passions." Whoever makes that assertion knows very little about the multitude. Look at the papers which please the great mass of the people, and you will find articles on science, trade, education, the steam-engine, and matters which would appear tedious to us. They do not desire their bad passions to be aroused—they seek to have their minds enlightened. They live by labour and seek to know how that labour may be best directed. I am afraid it is we—the idle rich—"the lords of luxury and ease," who require a false and meretricious excitement—who alone support the disgraces of the press—who encourage the slander and scandal, the venom and frivolity, which were first wrought into sundry libels, not by a radical journal, not by a heartless demagogue print, but by a paper professing a hatred of democratic principles and dignifying by its support the Tory cause. It pretends to furnish the gossip of the Court, and the tittle-tattle of the aristocracy. If you look at the large newspapers which circulate among the great mass of the people, you will find in them the most varied information, the most argumentative writing, and a great freedom from private calumny, vulgar slander, and personal abuse. But it may be said—if you make the press free, many dangerous and revolutionary political doctrines may be published. Doubtless, there will be, as now, doctrines of all sorts—the good and the bad? But who is to decide what is good and what bad? Some hon. Members on the other side of the House tell us that the doctrines of the present Government are revolutionary and dangerous; whereas, from

what I have heard this very night, if I were asked what doctrines were most likely to weaken the just influence of the Crown, separate the different classes, incense the people, and produce and hasten the course of revolution—I should say that it was the doctrine of the Conservatives. Who then shall decide the question as to what is good and what is bad—what is useful and what is revolutionary? None can do so: scarcely time itself can decide it. In the words of an able writer, "Truth requires no inscription to distinguish it from darkness; and all that truth wants is the liberty of expression." Has not the terror of the propagation of dangerous doctrines been used against the progress of enlightenment? Is it not for this that censors have been placed upon books, and inquisitors upon opinions? What effect have these prosecutions produced? The French Court prohibited the works of Voltaire, and Voltaire became at once endowed with the power to shake old opinion to its centre. Geneva burnt the Social Contract of Rousseau, and out of its ashes arose the phœnix of its influence. Tom Paine had not sold ten copies of his notorious work, when the English Government thought fit to prosecute him, and within a week from that period there were sold 30,000 copies. Government never has prevented, and never can prevent, the propagation of dangerous doctrines by prohibitions, either in the shape of a tax or a law—the only effect of persecution is to render the doctrines more dangerous and the people more eager to learn them. If I want a new proof of the truth of this argument, do I not find it in the very tax I ask you to repeal? For how many years have you been endeavouring to put down the unstamped press, whose doctrines are alleged to be dangerous, and for how many years has it enjoyed impunity, and deluged every manufacturing town? The market has been literally overstocked with its productions. If you were to repeal the whole tax to-morrow, there would not be a single new publication of these dangerous inflammatory doctrines; for during the last seven or eight years every one who wished to publish them has done so with impunity. By the imposition of the tax upon the more respectable class, you have prevented any reply to these dangerous publica-

tions. You have given up the field to those who have sown it with noxious weeds, and prevented the good husbandman from labouring in it. You are now at last embarked in an obstinate war with the unstamped Press—a war in which I am sure you will not succeed. I ask the right hon. Gentleman, does he think for a moment that he can succeed so long as the tax is 200 per cent upon the article smuggled? My right hon. Friend is aware, better than myself, that the only way to diminish smuggling, where it has arisen to an enormous height, is to reduce the tax, and that is what I now urge upon my right hon. Friend. I do not ask a total repeal, but only a reduction to one penny. By this reduction, I think, a very great advantage will be gained. We shall materially extend the advantages of knowledge, without in the least diminishing the amount of revenue. The stamp duty at present produces (after allowing for the discount) three pence and a fraction upon each paper; and if it were reduced to one penny, we should require only three times the present number of papers to be sold to replace the loss suffered by the revenue. Does not every man acquainted with the habits of the working classes know—does not every man who is aware of their extraordinary desire for knowledge, scientific and political, feel, that we should then have three times as many papers published as at present? Besides, my right hon. Friend having made this concession, would then be justified in coming down to this House and demanding new and more efficient laws for the suppression of smuggling—the result of which would bring all, or nearly all the slippery fish that at present creep out of the meshes into my right hon. Friend's net. In addition to the increased circulation, there would be the increased advertisement duty, and the increased paper duty; so that without being at all sanguine, I say that the revenue would not, by any means, be a loser. Suppose the stamp duty reduced, as I have proposed, to one penny, such papers as the 'Times' and 'Chronicle' and the 'Herald,' which require a large capital, would not be able to sell for less than fourpence. But new papers not requiring so large a capital would be called into existence—papers partly literary, and containing the news of the day—half scientific and half commercial, which would

thus attract many readers. Above all, many religious publications would be called into existence, supported by different religious societies, and coming forth two or three times a-week. Thus a new class of periodicals would be called into existence, and all productive to the revenue in three ways—by the stamp duty, the advertisement duty, and the paper duty. It was stated in a periodical, a short time since, that if the whole duty were taken off, ten times as many papers would be published as at present; and, therefore, with only a tax of a penny, I have a right to assume that three times as many would be published. The amount of a penny tax upon three times the present number of sheets, would be £400,000. I greatly underrate the paper duty if I take the increase at £30,000, and the increased advertisement duty at £20,000, making a total of £450,000, which equals the sum produced by the present fourpenny tax The increased paper duty I have greatly underrated, as a high duty diminishes the profit and the sale to a very considerable extent. In a calculation made respecting the 'Penny Magazine' it has been shown that if a tax of one penny was imposed, the sale would be decreased one-tenth; and comparing the increased duty on the stamp with the loss of revenue on the paper, it has been clearly ascertained that the Exchequer would lose, on that paper alone, £400 a-year. Apply this argument generally, and you will see how much the revenue loses by the present high rate of duty. The system has robbed the revenue on the one hand of more than it has paid into it on the other. I shall not detain the House much longer; but, before I conclude, I must say that the present Government owes something to the provincial Press; and, with few exceptions, the provincial Press has petitioned for some relief. The provincial Press has supported the Government nobly, and without its assistance I doubt much if any liberal Government could have made head against the determined and vehement attacks of three morning papers of great circulation and influence. Yet the provincial papers are cramped in their exertions, and limited in their power, by the audience they address being narrowed and limited by the stamp duty. You owe something also to those who, adopting

opinions more (I should say) determined and dreaded than your own, have yet supported you frankly and generously. The panegyric which my right hon. Friend has to-night pronounced upon that class who, professing these opinions, have yet compromised them to a certain extent, and given to the Government their independent and undivided support, is another argument in favour of my motion; for there is no concession which will be looked upon as a greater boon, nor none which will be repaid more largely and generously by the party who, whether in praise or blame, are called the Radical party, than a concession upon this point. If any body of men have ever acted from the purest public motives, patriotically and disinterestedly, I believe it is that party, and, therefore, I do say that my right hon. Friend owes them some concession. The last argument I shall use is, that the Government owe it to themselves and to their own consistency, to make some concession to the Press. They will not in such a case be sacrificing their own opinions to please a great body of the public and of their supporters—they will be merely following up those sentiments which they have expressed on former occasions. There are few now on the Treasury Bench who have not, on some former occasion, expressed themselves favourable to the measure. The right hon. the President of the Board of Trade, the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and even his Majesty's present Attorney-General, have given dignity to the question by their acknowledged affection to its principle. I have the greatest confidence, therefore, in the present Government, and I hope upon this question, as upon all others, I shall live to see them faithful to the great principle of Reform which proportions power to intelligence, and which, while it renders the Constitution more popular, prevents the danger by rendering the people more enlightened. So strong is my reliance upon the objects and intentions of the present Government, that I am satisfied the more widely their sentiments are diffused and known, the more generally will they be approved. I regret to see them shut themselves out from half the national enthusiasm, and half the popular support which would be theirs, were the

laws they enact, and the principles they advocate, brought cheaply, easily, and familiarly before that great class of the community for whose benefit they have laboured, and in whose cause they have won their most imperishable renown. It is with this hope that I now move that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider the question that, for the more general diffusion of knowledge, it is expedient that the Stamp Duty on Newspapers be reduced to one penny.

VII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 22D OF MAY 1838.

ON Tuesday, the 22d May 1838, the Member for North Warwickshire, Sir Eardley Wilmot, submitted to the House of Commons a resolution for the immediate abolition of Negro Apprenticeship. After a brief but animated debate the House divided, when the motion was carried by 96 votes to 93. Immediately before the division was taken, the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—I do not dispute the good effects produced by the agitation of this question without the walls of Parliament. I agree with my hon. friend, the Member for Wolverhampton, that agitation without is often the result and the corrective of indifference within. It is an excitement of which no man can complain, unless he complains of the strongest instincts and the holiest sympathies which Providence has implanted in our nature,—it is the excitement which in all ages has existed where Humanity could lift its voice against Oppression—it is the agitation which never can be allayed in a free and generous people, while they feel for the sufferings which they have it in their power to relieve. To deprecate agitation in the cause of men

who have been wronged, is to mourn over all that is active in virtue—over all that is charitable in religion. But though I rejoice in the almost universal feeling which exists upon this subject, and which makes the people of England more anxious, more importunate, more resolute, in behalf of others, than they have ever been in demanding justice for themselves, I am not insensible of the disadvantage under which those who agree with me labour on this solemn occasion. The agitation that may swell the number of votes in favour of our motion, diminishes the influence of the arguments by which it is supported. Too often jealous of our rights as deliberate legislators, we forget our first character of responsible representatives; and where a man is supposed to be influenced by his constituents, we are inclined to doubt the sincerity of his own opinions—as if Truth were discovered only by individuals, and lost in its value in proportion as it penetrated the multitude. I know—I painfully feel—this disadvantage in your secret prepossessions; the friend of the negro, in these walls, addresses a languid audience; and it is almost a hopeless prayer when I ask for that patient and unprejudiced attention which you have refused to men whose abilities would, on other subjects, have enforced the claim. I enter not into the abstract inquiry, whether there was a contract with the planter, or whether we only passed a law with conditions attached to it. Heaven forbid that England should resort to casuistry whenever there is a question of her faith! I allow at once that the honour of Parliament was pledged to the planter; [*Hear!*] ay, but are there no other parties in the bond? —our honour is pledged to the planter, but it is pledged with no less solemnity to the negro-population, and to the British people, whose gold we obtained upon the most explicit promises—upon the most definite understanding. Those promises and that understanding were, first, the English Act of Parliament, which announced that slavery should cease; and, secondly, the speeches of the Government in explanation of that Act,—especially of the noble Lord the member for North Lancashire, in which he declared, that after the passing of that Act, "every slave should enjoy every right and every privilege of a freeman,

subject to this restriction only, that he should, for a certain time, remain under contract to labour industriously in the service of his employer." Now this is the question from which the opponents to the present motion shrink. They talk of preserving a compact and keeping faith solely with one party—the planters—and seem quite to forget the two other parties to whom they had given equal promises, with whom they had entered into equal obligations—namely, the negroes and the English people. Has faith been kept with the two last; have the promises of the noble Lord been fulfilled? The hon. Baronet the Under-Secretary for the colonies, says—yes, by the majority; he says that "in the great majority of instances there has been on the part of the West-India proprietors a *bona fide* adherence to the spirit as well as to the letter of the Emancipation Act." But I contend that the act or the compact has been violated, not by a minority—not even by a small majority, but by the whole body of the planters in every colony where legislative assemblies exist. For how can nation deal with nation, or a mother country with her colony, except through the medium of the legislative assemblies in those places where legislative assemblies exist? When you suspended the constitution of Canada you said, justly, that it was not so much on account of the revolt, as because of the conduct of the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly, where it exists, is the legitimate organ, not of a minority, not of a majority, but of the whole community which elects its members as agents and trustees. Well, then, is it not of the Legislative Assemblies freely chosen by the white population—the voice of all the planters—that your governors the most bitterly complain? For the Assembly of Jamaica, containing the largest slave-population of all, you have not a word of defence. You have the evidence of your own governor that that Assembly violated the law or the compact in almost every particular—in the hours of labour, in the allowance of food, in the flogging of females. You have Lord Sligo's evidence not only that the members of that Assembly violate the law or the compact, but that when the violation is pointed out, they do not pay the smallest attention to his remonstrances. Mr Jeremie,

in the appendix to the report of the select committee on negro apprenticeship, after comparing the Jamaica Act with the English Act, states (p. 5 of the appendix) that "nearly every one of the enactments of the Jamaica Act is directly opposed to the spirit and letter of the British Act, and therefore that they are legally null and void *ab initio*." Who is Mr Jeremie? Why, the prime, favourite, selected, panegyrised authority of the Government. Mr Beldam, after analysing the Jamaica acts, states, "that the passing of the act No. 3, and the subsequent conduct of the Jamaica House of Assembly on the question of the revival of the act No. 2, which, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the home Government and the colonial Governor, had been suffered to expire, removed all further motives for delicacy in treating with this refractory colony, as it plainly demonstrates the want of good faith so long and so loudly complained of by the friends of the enfranchised negroes. It now remains to be decided by a competent tribunal whether laws of the character already exhibited in the preceding analysis are to be accepted as an adequate and satisfactory fulfilment of the conditions upon which twenty millions sterling have been paid by the mother country?" And is Jamaica a single instance? No! Pass on to page 83 in the same report—we come to Barbadoes. "The Barbadoes abolition acts, even in their amended form, exhibit most of the glaring defects already noticed in the Jamaica abolition acts," these defects being nothing more nor less than violations of the English law—in other words, of the mutual compact. But are Barbadoes and Jamaica solitary instances? Not so. For the same authority (your own authority, mind) goes on to state "that the laws of nineteen colonies, in many respects equally objectionable with those already commented upon, must undergo the same inquiry." So, then, not by individuals, not by minorities, but by the constituted delegates of their whole bodies, the planters have been guilty of systematic, general, deliberate, formal violation of your boasted compact. Even in the first flush of their pecuniary triumph, with the British gold yet heavy in their hands, with the ink scarcely dry on the Imperial Act, we behold these men making

their own assemblies the systematic defeaters of the law and the fraudulent violators of its conditions. Well, but are the legislative assemblies the only criminals? Where next should we look to see if the planters have broken faith as a body? Not to individuals; no, but to their subordinate authorities, their officials—these are the next representatives of their opinions and conduct. What does your favourite Mr Baynes say (Part IV., p. 314) of the local magistrates? Why, that "the illegal commitment of apprentices to the house of correction by the local magistrates is a practice prevalent throughout the island of Jamaica, though a manifest violation of the first principle of the abolition law." What can we say of a coroner's jury who, in the celebrated instance of the woman tortured to death at the treadmill, returned a verdict—"Died by the visitation of God"? What can we say of constables, generally selected for their qualifications as slave-drivers? What of grand juries, charged by Sir Lionel Smith himself with disregard of their oaths? The fact is clear, from the highest to the lowest, the officials are not dispensers of law, but the legalised tools and instruments for consummating oppression on the negro, and completing the fraud upon British credulity. But, well said the seconder of the motion in that acute and luminous speech which, if it fell cold on the House, would not fall cold on the country—well said the Member for Wolverhampton, that we could not want a stronger proof of the universal violation of the compact than your own bill, which is to be universally applied. What does your bill propose?—merely to enforce the former Act, which in all its provisions had been evaded; and what was that Act, but the parchment of the very contract upon which you insist? I then throw back upon you your own assertion of breach of faith. I assert that with the planter we have kept faith; that there was no adulteration, no paring and filching of the gold he received; perfect it was in tale and weight. You have kept faith with the planter; but I tell you with whom it is you ask us to break faith—with the thousands and tens of thousands whom you mocked with the name of free—with the majesty of the Imperial Parliament, whose acts have been trampled under foot—

with the people of England who paid their millions, not to abolish the name slavery, but the thing slavery. You ask us to break faith with justice, with humanity, with Heaven itself, in order that you may keep faith with Mammon. But the hon. Member for Newark, in that speech the ability of which is above all praise, but the arguments in which are happily not beyond all reply, claims exemption for British Guiana! Barbadoes, Jamaica, the Mauritius, you cannot exonerate or defend; the first lawyer in England (Sir E. Sugden) has allowed that Jamaica violated the compact. Well, then, what is Jamaica? Why, the colony possessing the largest slave-population of all. Jamaica has four times the slave-population of Guiana; Barbadoes has nearly the same population as Guiana. What, then if we were to meet the Member for Newark at once by making him a present of Guiana? What if we were to say, this is but one colony; is it subordinate to Jamaica, the colony which it is impossible to excuse? Its population sinks into absolute insignificance when to Jamaica you add Barbadoes and the Mauritius. Grant that Guiana is immaculate—grant that your facts are true—and still the innocence of one colony is never to be held as an exemption for the guilt of the others—or at most, all you can do is to make a special case for Guiana; and I call on the House to observe, that all the hon. Member can say on that subject may be at most to vindicate one colony; but till he has proved Jamaica, and Barbadoes, and the Mauritius innocent, he cannot prove anything against the passing of the present resolution. But is Guiana innocent? The hon. Member for Newark on a former night complained of *ex parte* and unproved statements. Did he indulge in none himself? Have not some of his facts—have not most of his deductions—been denied in public meetings, and in the face of day—denied by eyewitnesses of the state of Guiana—denied by references to Parliamentary documents?—[Mr Gladstone shook his head and smiled.]—Ay, and though it may suit hon. Members to sneer at the zeal of the friends of the negro, I say that, according to all the laws of testimony, it is more likely that men having no sinister and selfish interest to serve will give more faithful accounts than the

planters, who have a direct personal interest to bias their judgment. I grant that in Guiana the negro is much better off than in Jamaica. I grant that it is the colony in which slavery seems least odious. But is Guiana innocent? Has not Guiana violated the law? Has it not invaded the contract? Listen again to your own beloved authority in the report upon the system of apprenticeship. Does not your own analyst assert that in many most important points the British Guiana Act violates the compact, that is the Imperial Act, for the Act and the compact you allow are one and the same:—"The power of inflicting unlimited extra labour as a punishment for grievous complaints is repugnant to the Imperial Act, and would of itself explain much of the apparent content of this colony." So again, sections 9 and 10—"These classes contain direct infringement of the rights of manumission, and are plainly repugnant to the Imperial Act." But is this all? I will concede to the hon. Member that punishments in Guiana have greatly decreased of late. But in the returns before the House, the third table, from the 1st of June 1836 to the 31st of May 1837, gives a total of punishments of 7596, which averages one in every nine apprentices throughout the colony; and if you will compare this with any return from Jamaica (for that or any other year) you will find it (compared to the relative populations) equal in the average to the number of punishments in Jamaica—viz., to the most barbarous of all the colonies. But punishment has decreased since. Yes! and why? I call in Sir James Carmichael Smyth, who is your authority for maintaining the apprenticeship, as my witness for its abolition—because (according to Sir James Smyth's uniform testimony), not of the leniency of the planters, but because of the exemplary conduct of the negroes. He tells you that whatever complaints have been made against the labourer, it has appeared on investigation that the fault arose from the fraud or illegal exactions of the planters. He asserts that in no part of the globe are the labouring population more peaceable, more industrious, than in Guiana. In his speech of January 1836 (2. Part III., p. 120), he says, "I ask if any gentleman can point out any part of his Majesty's dominions where fewer crimes are

committed, where greater tranquillity is enjoyed, or where the labouring population is more industrious?" Well, will the House believe that in the very year—the very month—in which he pronounces this eulogium on the population, the returns of punishment—yes, in that very month of January 1836—amount to 922, which would give an average of 11,064 for the whole year, being nearly a sixth part of the whole population—a population thus industrious, thus orderly, thus free from crime, and yet thus punished under the orders of the special magistrate! Oh, blessed inversion of all the laws by which society redeemed from barbarism is bound! Behold the maximum of punishment accompanying the minimum of crime! What do Sir James Smyth's statements prove? Why, that this admirable population is fit for liberty, and every word in favour of that population is a testimony in favour of the motion before the House. We remember the effect produced by the Member for Newark, when he told us of the slaves on an estate clubbing together, and sending to their white brethren in these realms who were in distress the contribution of their savings. And when I heard that touching instance of humanity and beneficence in those poor negroes, I did compare them with us; I did ask whether those men had not proved themselves by that very act fit for emancipation, and I blushed to think that the genius of one of our ablest Members was at that instant citing their very virtues as an argument for their continued degradation. And you assert that the slaves are not fit for immediate freedom! Will two years of additional misery render them more fit? What a school for liberty you found and defend!—treadmills on which females are tortured for twenty hours at a stretch—dropping from that wholesale rack, bleeding, mangled—exhausted—dying; hospitals for the sick characterised by such inventions as Spanish cruelty may have hatched in the Inquisition for the prisons of the guilty;—dungeons more desolate and fœtid than feudal tyranny ever built in ages when liberty was a forbidden word;—the pitiless planter—the brutal overseer—the iniquitous judge—the perjured jury—the blaspheming coroner—the slave-driving constable;—oh, what noble aids and appliances, what tutors,

and what textbooks for the education of destined freemen! Not fit for liberty, when in Guiana your governor tells you that there is no more improving and industrious population—not in the colonies alone—no, but in all her Majesty's dominions. Not fit for freedom, when in Jamaica your own special magistrates declare that, in respect for the law and in religious sentiments, the negroes are superior to the planters! Not fit for freedom!—Let the new freemen of Antigua answer the calumnious charge! There you have at once the comparison and contrast between apprenticeship and emancipation. Say what you will of apprenticeship, you must confess, at least, that the experiment has failed of entire success—say what you will of it, you confess the hardship, the cruelty, the injustice, the fraud which it has failed to cure. But will one of you dare to tell us that immediate emancipation has failed in effect—that there is one stain of human blood upon the Act of Antigua which made men free? Is not Antigua a fair instance?—you slur it over—you pass it by. What is Antigua? a colony possessing but a handful of whites—a whole population of negroes. Property and life were at the mercy of the enfranchised slaves. Look to the result. Not an estate abandoned; not an outrage committed; not a hair on the white man's head that was not sacred! Danger from the free negro! Why, in Antigua, who are the police themselves?—who are the constables?—Negroes; and if there be no danger in Antigua, where the whites are so few and the negroes so numerous, how can there be danger in Jamaica, where the white population could at any moment master any insurrection of the blacks? But would you insist still on some mystic differences between Antigua and Jamaica? Would you still say that the parallel is not fair? would you still assert that emancipation, safe in Antigua, would be perilous in Jamaica? Well, then, I nail you to Jamaica itself! What does Sir Lionel Smith, in one of his last despatches, November 13, 1837—what does he tell you? Why, that so far from the Jamaica planters thinking there would be the the least danger in emancipation, "all parties would agree to abandon the system to-morrow for further compensation." But we are not provided with laws for

the apprentices after they become free, and they will be in a worse condition if you emancipate them than they are now. Oh, how this argument condemns the colonial government, for are you not going now to emancipate the non-prædial labourers? On the 1st of August 1838, you will turn loose on society, thousands and thousands of men absolutely and abruptly made free. Where are the laws to provide for them? And you cannot draw any distinction between them and the prædials, without also condemning yourselves. For though no laws are passed, you have been yet recommending to the various states to enfranchise the prædials. The Isle of Nevis has already done so, Tortola will follow the example, Dominica and Grenada appear disposed to obey your wishes; and if, therefore, your argument were good, you yourselves would have recommended the very measure which you tell us would be more injurious to the negroes than the present system. But then you say there is a difference whether the colonists do this of their own accord or whether we compel them to do it. And how does Barbadoes (the third greatest slave colony) meet this assertion? Why, the House of Assembly tells you, that it would be placing itself in an onerous position with the British Parliament, were it to supersede by an act of its own one of the most important provisions of the abolition law, and thereby assume to itself the responsibility of a measure which could be carried into effect with more safety and with greater chance of success by that august body. The fact is, that the very colonies that hold out are the very colonies that have most insulted the mother country, most duped the English people, and most flagrantly violated the compact. And they hold out avowedly in the hope of extorting a large ransom, and doubling the pieces of silver they have already received as the price of blood. It is not to them—it is to us you owe an account; we have paid the ransom—it is for you to obtain the redemption. Farther compensation!—yes, indeed, by your act, your compact, farther compensation *is* due. Compensation, not to the planter—*he* has been paid in full; but compensation to the people of Great Britain for wasted millions, for violated faith! Can the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, can

the Member for Newark, rise and tell us that we have attained the object for which we counted out our gold? Can you tell us fairly and boldly that this apprenticeship has been that mild and hopeful interval between slavery and freedom which you contemplated when the Act was proposed? Can you tell us, that if we had possessed the gift of prophecy, and foreseen with what records these Parliamentary documents were to be filled—can you tell us, that one man in this House would have dared to insult the English people with the proposition of purchasing such a system at such a cost? Will the noble Lord the Member for Lancashire say, on the pledge of his reputation and his honour, that when he made this bargain for the English people, he anticipated this species of fidelity from the planter? In these despatches, these reports, these tables of hideous affliction, these summaries of the monthly average of human groans, can he find the rigid fulfilment of that promise which he made to the millions who hung upon his word, "that the slave should retain no taint of his former servile condition," and called upon the name of Wilberforce to attest the promise and to sanctify the deed! Yes, to us compensation is indeed due; but if to us, how much more to the negro!—No, not to *him*—the very magnitude of his wrongs denies even the possibility of compensation? No gold can buy back to him the agonised years already wasted since that act of mockery was past; no gold can buy back human life itself! Will twenty times twenty millions compensate to the son for the mother who has died beneath the torture, and whose very death the officers of planter-justice have imputed to the visitation of God? Compensate to the mother, who, in the very agonies of childbirth, found no exemption from the grinding, toil and the lifted scourge, and who has been robbed of a hope, cherished, perhaps, amidst all her own anguish of giving birth to an offspring happier than his sires? No! we cannot demand compensation for the negro—we cannot call back the past. But justice and sympathy for the future—*these* at least are in our power! But only two years remain. Why, you ask, make this stir and commotion for two years—two little years? What! are two years nothing in the

life of man? Do we not know—we who have constituents—that when one individual in whom those constituents are interested, is tried, found guilty, condemned, sentenced to the prison or the hulks—do we not know what interest is made to strike two years from the term of punishment? Two years of loss of liberty, two years subjected even to the discipline of responsible and mild control—what efforts do we make to save a fellow-creature from that affliction! But now we ask the boon, not for one man, but for thousands—not for guilt, but for innocence—not for exemption from legal penance, but from irresponsible oppression! Complete the picture—add to the loss of liberty all the whips and stings which power can inflict on weakness, and, then, will you dare to tell us that two years are nothing in the aggregate of human existence? You say this system shall not be abolished; but will you explain to us how it shall be continued—continued in defiance of the loud and indignant voice of the English people? How can you expect security, and peace, and order, when the negro on one estate sees the negroes on another (no better than himself) are free, when father and son are separated by your unintelligible verbal barbarisms of prædial and non-prædial—when you yourselves are recommending their legislators to emancipate them, and when, if they were to rise (which heaven forbid), you would not dare to interpose a military force from this country between mutual massacre and revenge? And the colonial government hope that the parchment of the Act passed through this House will serve to remedy all evils. If so, why do you urge upon the colonies the propriety of immediate emancipation? But you know it cannot. Four sheets of paper never yet built a wall between tyranny and weakness. Your bill devises two remedies:—1st, you propose to give to proclamations the force of law; secondly, you arm your special magistrates with new authority. As to proclamations, your own governors tell you that the planters laugh them to scorn. As to giving them the force of law, law itself is a dead letter, when the public opinion of those on whom it is imposed does not breathe into it the only principle of life it can receive. Special magistrates! why, what

have they been? Either the mere tools of the planter, or else, where they have been the friends of the negro, they have only succeeded in embroiling matters, and exciting false hopes in the negro, new tyranny in the planter. Take the case of Judge Palmer. He was superseded: for what offence? Will the House believe it?—because the Commissioners of Inquiry declared that "he administered the law in the spirit of the English Abolition Act, and that the present state of St Thomas-in-the-Vale was to be attributed to such a mode of administering the abolition law." So, here is a special magistrate condemned and punished for administering the law in the spirit in which we framed it, and according to the object for which the English people paid their gold. But few magistrates commit the same offence and incur the same fate as Judge Palmer: oh no, I find the 'Jamaica Standard' (the organ of the planters) loud in praise of special magistrates as men who have done their duty, and calling upon the planters to contribute money to the widows and families of such of them as have died. See then on one side the special magistrate who befriends the negro, harassed by commissions of inquiry, calumniated by the planter, abandoned by the Government, superseded solely for the offence of keeping faith with England; and behold on the other side the special magistrate who lends himself to the planter, who reports in his favour—who applauds the system and vindicates its instrument—quoted by Ministers as an admirable authority—admired by planters as an exemplary judge—praised and flattered—patronage here—pensions there—and can you doubt for an instant on which side your dispensers of law will lean? Depend upon it, all attempts to relax and mitigate slavery are hopeless and absurd. There are no ways of patching up the everlasting distinction between slavery and freedom; all that you can do is to diminish the interest of the planter in the health and life of the negro, and leave the wretch more exposed to the jealousy, because more obnoxious to the fears, of the tyrant. I cannnot understand this one-sided niceness of conscience, this terror of violating by a hair's breadth your compact with a planter, and this deaf and blind indifference to the equal obliga-

tions due to the other parties of the compact, the negroes and the people of these realms. You know that our law, which was the compact, has been violated in all the colonies; you know that the English people have not got that for which they paid their money, and yet you give up the rights of two parties for the sake of the third, you betray the innocent on behalf of the guilty;—you see no justice but where you confess oppression;—you venerate no sanctity but where you discover fraud! The hon. Member for Newark would represent the planters as men equally merciful and maligned. [Mr Gladstone: No.] What! did you not attempt to defend their general conduct; to prove them innocent of the charge of cruelty?—if you did not, where is the answer to our accusations? But if you did, what then? Is it not the old reply to the earliest advocates of emancipation? Let not the House be carried away by assurances that the planters are merciful masters and injured men:—such were the assurances with which Wilberforce and Clarkson were met at the threshold of their great design. Had Parliament listened, in former years, to such declarations, with the same respect and cordiality with which it greets them now, Wilberforce would have lived in vain! I accuse not the planters; I accuse the system: men are but the tools of the circumstances that surround them. Where tyranny is made legal, I execrate the tyranny, but I acquit the tyrant. You have heard from me no individual cases, branding individual persons—you have heard from me no doubtful references to anonymous authorities. My charge is against communities, not persons—my facts are in the books you appeal to as undeniable records. If the despatches of your governors, if the reports of your magistrates, if this whole mass of parliamentary evidence be not one lie—I tell you that your arguments against this motion are shivered to the dust! I have proved, that not individuals, not minorities, but (where legislative assemblies exist in your colonies) whole communities have been, from first to last, invaders of your law, violators of your compact. I have proved that faith is due, not to the planters, but to their victims and their dupes. I have proved that there is no danger in the course we recommend—

proved it by reference to actual experience in Antigua, to the assertions of your governor in Jamaica, where all parties would abandon the system for compensation—proved it by your own recommendations to the colonies. Answer all this if you can; if you answer it to your satisfaction, you belie your governors, you impeach your witnesses, you condemn yourselves. Year after year, and session after session, we debate on the mere forms and ceremonials of our religion, whether this oath may be abolished—whether this distinction may be removed—whether by one law or by another we can best preserve the husk and shell of religion—its ecclesiastical establishment; I honour all men's consciences upon these points; but here we come to the fountain of Christianity itself—its all-protecting brotherhood, its all-embracing love. When scholars and divines have summed up the blessings that our common creed has conferred upon mankind, first and foremost of those blessings they have placed the abolition of that slavery which stained and darkened the institutions of the Pagan world. I know of no Pagan slavery worse than this Christian apprenticeship. Here, then, we fight again the same battle as our first fathers, the primitive Christians, from whom all our sects and divisions have emerged. Here is a ground upon which Catholic and Protestant, and the wide families of dissent, all may unite; and I do believe that he who votes against this dark hypocrisy of slavery in disguise will obtain something better than the approval of constituents—something holier than the gratification of party triumph and political ambition—in the applause of his own conscience, and in those blessings that will not rise the less to the Eternal Throne because they are uttered by the victims of human avarice and pride.

[In Lord Lytton's political life a gap occurs here of eleven years—namely, from the 30th June of 1841 to the 22d July of 1852, during which interval he was out of Parliament.]

VIII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HALL OF COMMERCE

ON THE 1ST OF MARCH 1851.

ON the evening of Saturday, the 1st of March, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton presided as Chairman at the Public Dinner given to Mr Macready, in the Hall of Commerce, by way of Farewell, on the occasion of the tragedian's withdrawal from the stage. In proposing the toast of the evening, the following speech was delivered.

GENTLEMEN,—When I glance through this vast hall, and feel how weak and indistinct is my voice, I feel that I must frankly throw myself upon your indulgence, and entreat your most patient and courteous attention while I approach that subject which unites to-day an assembly so remarkable for the numbers and distinction of those who compose it. We are met to do honour to an eminent man, who retires into private life after those services to the public which are almost most felt at the moment we are about to lose them. There are many among you far better qualified than I am to speak critically of the merits of Mr Macready as an actor, but placed as I am in this chair, I feel that I should justly disappoint you if I did not seek to give some utterance to those sentiments of admiration of which you have made me the representative. Gentlemen, this morning I read in one of the literary journals some qualifying remarks as

to the degree of Mr Macready's genius; and now, as I recognise here many who are devoted to literature and art, I will ask them if I am not right in this doctrine—that the true measure of the genius of an artist is the degree of excellence to which he brings the art that he cultivates. Judge of Mr Macready by this test, and how great is that genius that will delight us no more; for it is because it has so achieved what I will call the symmetry of art that its height and its breadth have been often forgotten. We know that it is the uneven and irregular surface that strikes us as the largest, and the dimensions of a genius, like those of a building, are lost in the justness of its proportions; and therefore it is that in recalling the surpassing excellence of our guest as an artistical performer, one is really at a loss to say in what line of character he has excelled the most. The Titanic grandeur of Lear, the human debasement of Werner, the frank vivacity of Henry V., the gloomy and timorous guilt of King John, or, that—his last—personation of Macbeth, in which it seemed to me that he conveyed a more correct notion of what Shakespeare designed than I can recollect to have read in the most profound of the German critics; for I take it, what Shakespeare meant to represent in Macbeth was the kind of character which is most liable to be influenced by a belief in supernatural agencies—a man who is acutely sensitive to all impressions, who has a restless imagination more powerful than his will, who sees daggers in the air and ghosts in the banquet-hall, who has moral weakness and physical courage, and who—as our guest represented him—alternates perpetually between terror and daring—a trembler when oppressed by his conscience, and a warrior when defied by his foe. But in this and in all that numberless crowd of characters which is too fresh in your memories for me to enumerate, we don't so much say "How well this was spoken," or "How finely that was acted," but we feel within ourselves how true was the personation of the whole. Gentlemen, there is a word that is often applied to artists and to authors, and I think we always apply it improperly when we speak of a superior intellect—I mean the word "versatile." Now, I think the proper word is "comprehensive." The man of genius does not

vary and change, which is the meaning of the word versatile, but he has a mind sufficiently expanded to comprehend variety and change. If I can succeed in describing the circle, I can draw as many lines as I please from the centre straight to the circumference, but it must be upon the condition—for that is the mathematical law—that all these lines shall be equal, one to the other, or it is not a circle that I describe. Now, I do not say our guest is versatile; I say that he is comprehensive; and the proof that he has mastered the most perfect form of the comprehensive faculty is this—that all the lines he has created within the range of his art are equal the one to the other. And this, gentlemen, explains to us that originality which even his detractors have conceded to him. Every great actor has his manner as every great writer has his style. But the originality of our guest does not consist in his manner alone, but in his singular depth of thought. He has not only accomplished the obvious and essential graces of the actor—the look, the gesture, the intonation, the stage play—but he has placed his study far deeper. He has sought to penetrate into the subtlest intentions of the poet, and made poetry itself the golden key to the secrets of the human heart. He was original because he never sought to be original but to be truthful; because, in a word, he was as conscientious in his art as he is in his actions. Gentlemen, there is one merit of our guest as an actor, upon which, if I were silent, I should be indeed ungrateful. Many a great performer may attain to a high reputation if he restrains his talents to acting Shakespeare and the great writers of the past; but it is perfectly clear that in so doing he does not advance one inch the literature of his time. It has been the merit of our guest to recognise the truth that the actor has it in his power to assist in creating the writer. He has identified himself with the living drama of his period, and by so doing he has half created it. Who does not recollect the rough and manly vigour of Tell, the simple grandeur of Virginius, or the exquisite sweetness and dignity and pathos with which he invested the self-sacrifice of Ion; and who does not feel that but for him these great plays might never have obtained their hold upon the stage, or ranked

among those masterpieces which this age will leave to posterity? And what charm and what grace, not their own, he has given to the lesser works of an inferior writer, it is not for me to say. But, gentlemen, all this, in which he has sought to rally round him the dramatic writers of his time, brings me at once from the merits of the actor to those of the manager. I recall, gentlemen, that brief but glorious time when the drama of England appeared suddenly to revive and to promise a future that should be worthy of its past; when by a union of all kindred arts, and the exercise of a taste that was at once gorgeous and severe, we saw the genius of Shakespeare properly embodied upon our stage, though I maintain that the ornament was never superior to the work. Just remember the manner in which the supernatural agency of the weird sisters was made apparent to our eye, in which the magic Isle of Prospero rose before us in its mysterious and haunted beauty, and in which the knightly character of the hero of Agincourt received its true interpretation from the pomp of the feudal age, and you will own you could not strip the scene of these effects without stripping Shakespeare himself of half the richness and depth of his conceptions. But that was the least merit of that glorious management. Mr Macready not only enriched the scene, but he purified the audience; and for the first time since the reign of Charles II., a father might have taken his daughters to a public theatre with as much safety from all that could shock decorum as if he had taken them to the house of a friend. And for this reason the late lamented Bishop of Norwich made it a point to form the personal acquaintance of Mr Macready, that he might thank him, as a prelate of the Church, for the good he had done to society. Gentlemen, I cannot recall that period without a sharp pang of indignant regret, for if that management had lasted some ten or twelve years, I know that we would have established a permanent school for actors—a fresh and enduring field for dramatic poetry and wit —while we should have educated an audience up to feel that dramatic performances in their highest point of excellence had become an intellectual want that could no more be dispensed with than the newspaper or review. And all this to be checked

or put back for ages to come! Why? Because the public did not appreciate the experiment! Mr Macready has told us that the public supported him nobly, and that his houses overflowed. Why then? Because of the enormous rent and exactions for a theatre which, even in the most prosperous seasons, made the exact difference between profit and loss. Gentlemen, it is not now the occasion to speak of remedies for that state of things. Remedies there are, but they are for legislation to effect. They involve considerations with regard to those patents which are secured to certain houses for the purpose of maintaining in this metropolis the legitimate drama, and which, I fear, have proved the main obstacle to its success. But these recollections belong to the past. The actor—the manager—are no more. Whom have we with us to-day? Something grander than actor or manager: to-day we have with us the man. Gentlemen, to speak of those virtues which adorn a home, and are only known in secret, has always appeared to me to be out of place upon public occasions; but there are some virtues which cannot be called private, which accompany a man everywhere, which are the essential part of his public character, and of these it becomes us to speak, for it is to these that we are met to do homage. I mean integrity, devotion to pure ends, and a high ambition, manly independence, and honour that never knew a stain. Why should we disguise from ourselves that there are great prejudices to the profession of an actor? Who does not know that our noble guest has lived down every one such prejudice, not falling into the old weakness of the actor, and for which Garrick could not escape the sarcasm of Johnson, of hankering after the society and patronage of the great? The great may have sought in him the accomplished gentleman, but he has never stooped his bold front as an Englishman to court any patronage meaner than the public, or to sue for the smiles with which fashion humiliates the genius it condescends to flatter. And therefore it is that he has so lifted up that profession to which he belongs into its proper rank amid the liberal arts; and therefore it is that in glancing over the list of our stewards we find every element of that aristocracy upon which he has never fawned uniting to render him

its tribute of respect. The ministers of foreign nations—men among the noblest of the peers of England—veterans of those professions of which honour is the lifespring—the chiefs of literature and science and art—ministers of the Church, sensible of the benefits he has bestowed upon society in banishing from the stage what had drawn upon it the censure of the pulpit—all are here, and all unite to enforce the truth, the great truth, which he leaves to those who come after him—that let a man but honour his calling, and the calling will soon be the honour of the man. Gentlemen, I cannot better sum up all I would say than by the words which the Roman orator applied to the actor of his day; and I ask you if I may not say of our guest as Cicero said of Roscius—"He is a man who unites yet more of virtues than of talents, yet more of truth than of art, and who, having dignified the scene by the various portraitures of human life, dignifies yet more this assembly by the example of his own." Gentlemen, the toast I am about to propose to you is connected with many sad associations, but not to-day. Later and long will be cherished whatever may be sad of these mingled feelings that accompany this farewell—later, when night after night we shall miss from the play-bill the old familiar name, and feel that one source of elevated delight is lost to us for ever. To-day let us only rejoice that he whom we so prize and admire is no worn-out veteran retiring to a rest he can no longer enjoy—that he leaves us in the prime of his powers, with many years to come, in the course of nature, of that dignified leisure for which every public man must have sighed in the midst of his triumphs, and though we cannot say of him that his

> "way of life
> Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,"

yet we can say that he has prematurely obtained

> "that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends;"

and postponing for this night all selfish regrets, not thinking of the darkness that is to follow, but of the brightness of the sun that is to set, I call upon you to drink with full glasses and full hearts, "Health, happiness, and long life to William Macready."

IX.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT

THE ROYSTON MECHANICS INSTITUTION

ON THE 3D OF JUNE 1852.

ON Thursday, the 3d of June 1852, the following Lecture was deliverd by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton at the Mechanics Institute in Royston, Hertfordshire. It gave the "Outlines of the Early History of the East, with explanatory descriptions of some of the more remarkable nations and cities mentioned in the Old Testament." Prefixed to the address afterwards in its printed form was the subjoined note :—

"In a popular Lecture, it is often necessary to decide peremptorily between very conflicting authorities as to facts and dates, without entering into those arguments on behalf of such decision that would necessitate a display of learning wearisome to the audience and unsuited to the occasion. In many such vexed questions, I have adopted views in accordance with those of HEEREN, in his great work on the Principal Nations of Antiquity. It would seem an idle ostentation to cite, in long array, the names of other writers, ancient and modern, to whom the professed scholar will easily recognise my obligations."

GENTLEMEN,—In assuming, for the first time, the capacity of Lecturer at an Institution dedicated to the noble task of popular instruction, I could not yield to your request without advancing some claim to your indulgence. For you are all aware how little leisure I have had since I entered into the engagement which I shall endeavour this evening to fulfil. It is only at brief and hurried intervals that I have been enabled to refresh

my memory by reference to the best authorities—to condense into the bounds of a single lecture the large range of history and research which the subject before me comprehends—and to give familiar effect to such observations as I would desire to impress upon your minds.

After much hesitation as to the subject I should choose for my lecture, suddenly I said to myself, "The Eternal Book of the People is The Bible." Now in the Old Testament the names of Nations and Cities constantly occur, which in my own boyhood excited in me a dim wondering curiosity to know more about them—to learn what in truth were those great cities of Sidon and Tyre—what was that mysterious Egypt, what was that mighty Babylon. And I said again to myself, "What thus interested me before I had the leisure and opportunities to instruct myself, may interest, also, all those who follow the history of the chosen people of Jehovah, from the tents of Abraham and the bondage of Egypt to their settlement beneath the Mount of Olives and amidst the ivory palaces of Solomon. Therefore, my listeners, this is the theme I have chosen; proposing to give you a general if brief view of those lights which the learning of scholars has thrown upon the places and the nations more especially referred to in Sacred History.

Gentlemen—I begin from the beginning.

Let us suppose how the Deluge has altered the whole face of the habitable earth—let us see the generations of Noah, wandering to and fro, bearing with them vague reminiscences of the arts and inventions that existed before the Flood. Now where would it be natural that men thus wandering would fix their earliest settlements? Think for yourselves, and you will make this answer: "They would settle where they could obtain the most plentiful subsistence with the least labour." And that region of the globe would be Asia.

If you cast your eyes on the map of the World, you will see that this quarter of the globe (the area of which is four times as large as Europe) fills the whole extent of the temperate zone—it is only its extremities which suffer from intense heat or rigorous cold; it contains not only all the productions of nature

to be found in Europe, but at infinitely less cost of labour; and it has produce the most luxuriant, which is all its own; it is surrounded by seas and intersected by rivers which facilitate communication and suggest the interchange of commerce. But of all Asia the Southern Division is the most alluring to the tastes and the wants of man; it comprises the most fertile regions of the earth; here the cotton plant and silkworm are indigenous; only here, it is said, can corn be found growing wild, as if here, from the kind parental soil, had sprung forth the original germ of the common food of man; here the air is fragrant with spices, the earth teems with gold, and the seas with pearl. Accordingly we find, both in sacred history and in all traditions of profane history, that the Southern Division of Asia is the district of the earth in which, after the deluge, cities were first founded and civilisation first arose.

But what part of Southern Asia would have the earliest preference? Think again, and you will answer: "That district where wandering men, subsisting by their flocks and herds, would find the widest pasture plains, and in the neighbourhood of great rivers that would furnish that ample supply of water so necessary and indeed so rare in the sunny climates of the East." Just such a situation we find for the site of that city which is recorded to be the earliest city after the flood. BABYLONIA is one vast level country—between two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris—and Herodotus (who is the father of profane history) says, that "of all the countries with which he was acquainted, Babylonia was by far the most fruitful in corn; the soil was so adapted for corn, that it never produced less than two hundred-fold, and in very favourable seasons even three hundred-fold." Here at once was an inducement to settle in such a country. But however man may desire to escape labour, still Providence has wisely decreed that labour shall find him out, and that to labour alone he can owe all that constitutes the difference between barbarism and civilisation.

According to our received chronology, it was in the second century after the deluge that the Divine Will interrupted the builders of Babel and dispersed the families of men. But to the

site of Babel the more intelligent descendants of Noah still returned; and no sooner had they fixed their settlement in this favoured region, than they found that the river Euphrates, which contributed to the fertility of the soil, was liable to constant inundations. They had to wrest their country from a perpetual flood—it was a country worth saving—and the task which necessitated their labour stimulated their skill. Necessity, we all know, is the mother of invention: so they early began to cut canals, in order to receive the overflow of the waters; then they perceived that these canals would serve the purpose of irrigating the pastures, which in a climate so warm and dry was essential; gradually these canals served for defence against the inroads of other wandering hordes; and gradually also, as civilisation increased, the same canals bore merchant vessels from river to river. Dams and embankments were constructed—Labour triumphed—Babylonia became the garden of the East and the centre of primeval commerce. Nature here too provided the inhabitants with materials that suggested the building of towns: all around the earliest city of the world, this great Babylon, stretched layers of a clay so perfect, that when merely dried in the sun it became so durable as to exist at the present day, retaining even the very inscriptions impressed on the bricks. Eight days' journey from Babylon was a place called Is, in which wells still smoke and boil up with a kind of bitumen, that forms the most incomparable lime or cement. It was the custom to place layers of rushes or palm-leaves between every thirtieth row of bricks as a binding material; and these very leaves are found so fresh, that you would not think they had been there a year, though the buildings in which they are placed were erected in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

Now you can understand why the races of men *first* settled in Babylonia, and why Babylon was naturally the earliest city; namely, because the land yielded the amplest means of subsistence, and the readiest materials for building. For several ages we now lose sight of the progress of this nation; both sacred and profane history give us but little information upon it, until about 600 years before Christ, when it began to blaze

forth and assume that special aspect of pomp and magnificence which we still attach to the idea of Babylon.

This new era commences with a conquest. And before I speak of this conquest, I must pursue somewhat further the general idea of the progress of the human race. We have seen that the first settlers would obtain the most fertile plains, as in Babylonia; others, expelled from these more alluring regions, would select the next best situations they could find; others, inferior in strength or numbers, or desirous of preserving their religion or their freedom from the despotism of the monarchies that became gradually established, would take refuge in mountains and defiles. These last nations would grow hardy and vigorous by their mountain life, which necessitates robust and simple habits; at the same time, as their population increased, they would be impelled by hunger and by envy to descend upon the settlers in the more fertile plains. Thus we nearly always find, in the early history of the world, that the conquering tribes are mountaineers. Now, one of these tribes, called the CHALDÆANS, sweeping down from the mountains of Taurus and Caucasus, overwhelmed Southern Asia, captured Babylon, and there established a new throne of the East. And the king of these Chaldæans was the famous Nebuchadnezzar. He conquered Asia to the shores of the Mediterranean, triumphed over the king of Egypt, destroyed Jerusalem, established what is called the Babylonian-Chaldæan Empire, and from his reign we date the full majesty and splendour of Babylon.

We have still extant a description of this city, by the waters of which the exiles of Israel "sate down and wept;" a description of it by an eyewitness, as enlarged and adorned by Nebuchadnezzar. It was built in the most exact regularity; it was a square; each of its sides fifteen miles in length—its whole circuit, therefore, was sixty miles; twenty-five gates of shining brass, on each of the four sides, admitted to the same number of streets, intersecting each other at right angles, so that each street was fifteen miles long and a hundred and fifty feet wide; the houses were very lofty; open courts and gardens abounded; right through the city ran the river Euphrates, spanned by a

bridge of magnificent dimensions. In the midst and probably on the very site of the old tower of Babel, rose the temple of the national god, Bel or Belus. At one extremity was the palace of Belshazzar. And here were those hanging gardens of which you may have read; they were composed of several vast terraces, the highest rising to the summit of the city walls; on these terraces were planted the stately trees of the East; animals of all kinds, and birds of all plumage, were found amidst the palm-trees and cedars; the verdure of the gardens was maintained by a mighty aqueduct, that watered all the trees. The walls of the city were encompassed by a vast ditch; those walls were so thick that several chariots could run abreast along their summit; and their height was 350 feet. Now then exert your imagination, and try and picture Babylon to yourselves. Fancy that you are approaching to it—amidst vast level plains, covered with corn and gleaming with rivers and lakes; and there, in a blue cloudless atmosphere, you see rising up this enormous city, the "lady of kingdoms"—her brazen gates glittering in the sun—her gardens overhanging the walls—and high in the midst soars up, story on story, the lofty temple of Bel, as if, like the earliest tower, it sought to escape from a deluge. Such was the city that was rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of the East; such was the pomp on which he gazed when a voice fell from heaven, saying, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

The renewed glory of Babylon was of brief duration. The grandson of Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar; and it was at the very time that Daniel was interpreting the mystic writing on the wall, that a conqueror had turned the bed of the Euphrates into the great lake which received the overflow, and a dry path was given up to the armies of the Medes and Persians. From that date Babylon became but a province of the Persians—

various revolts only accomplished its ruin; its walls were dismantled, its towers overthrown; in 600 years from the date of Nebuchadnezzar, it was already a desert. So were fulfilled the words of Isaiah, "the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses."

I shall now pass on to tell you something about those MEDES and PERSIANS who conquered Babylon. But I must first glance over another city akin to Babylon, and a people who ruled in the East before the Persians were yet known as a conquering race.

You open the book of Jonah, and you find that "Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord; and Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey"—that is, it took three days to go from one extreme of the city to another. Now we are told in Genesis (ch. x.) that out of the land of Shinar (that is, Babylonia, the early kingdom of Nimrod), went forth Ashur and builded Nineveh.

NINEVEH was the capital of the people called the Assyrians. This city, long before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, had attained to all that outward splendour, and all that internal corruption, which brought on it the envy of man and the wrath of heaven; its history, in profane writers, is so obscure and so beset with fable, that I will not fatigue you by dwelling on it, since I can give you no information upon which you can rely. But it was conquered by the Medes, in alliance with Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Assyrian empire was given partly to the Babylonians, principally to the Medes. The site of Nineveh itself seemed forgotten a very few centuries after its fall; yet our countryman Layard has lately brought its buried halls into light; and by the sculptures which he has discovered, we have a juster notion of the luxuriant civilisation to which the people of Nineveh had attained at a remote period, than any profane historians can afford to us. We discover that they had gained considerable knowledge in Architecture, in Art, in Mechanics, and in all the luxuries of ornament and dress. And what is very remarkable, the earliest sculptures of Nineveh are the best. But Layard's work upon Nineveh is so recent, and so

accessible, that I refer you, for further descriptions of that city, to a book which all may read with as much pleasure as profit.

Thus then the kingdom of Assyria had passed away—Babylon had fallen—and a new people, the MEDES, begin to be the prominent ruling nation of the eastern world. Now the Medes appear first to have formed but a part of the great Assyrian empire; they had revolted under able and warlike chiefs, whose history and dynasties are involved in hopeless dispute; and they had formed a powerful kingdom of their own, when they in turn were subjected by the conquest of a tribe akin to themselves, called the Persians.

These PERSIANS were a very remarkable race, and by far the manliest and the noblest that has yet appeared in our view of eastern history. They were the inhabitants, not of luxurious plains, but of rough highlands; their habits were rendered hardy by long winters and constant exercise; as hunters and herdsmen, they wandered to and fro their mountainous region; and a traditional saying of their most celebrated chief announces a simplicity of rude manhood, which contrasts indeed the effeminate corruption of Babylon and Nineveh: "I learned three things in my youth," says this chief, "to ride, to bend the bow, and to speak the truth." The very religion of the Persians, however erring, was less gross than that of the worshippers of Bel. We may imagine these mountaineers, after a long dreary winter, beholding the sun of the eastern sky burst forth on their hill-tops, and changing snow and barrenness into flowers and fertility; and, seeing in that sun a symbol of beneficence and joy, we can perhaps understand how they came to consider it as the emblem of God. They recognised indeed, as we do, two principles; one of good and of light (of which the sun was the type or symbol), and one of evil and eternal darkness. They seemed, as far as we can discover, to have believed also in the immortality of the soul; in guardian spirits; and it has been supposed that our notion of fairies was first borrowed from the Persians. They had strong national feelings; were divided somewhat in clans like our Scotch Highlanders; and had one tribe of hereditary nobility, who claimed the right to fight in the post of

danger, or round the person of the king, whom these clans elected as their general in war.

You can understand how a people like this, though small in numbers, would be destined to become the new conquerors of the East. Somewhat before the fall of Belshazzar, this people had united under a prince whom we call Cyrus, and who is still renowned in the songs and traditions of Asia as Khosroo the Conqueror. He appears to have been connected to the king of the Medes—Greek history makes him that king's grandson; he attained to the throne of that rising and mighty kingdom, which, though in reality it now passed to the sway of the Persian, was henceforth generally styled the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. This was the Cyrus* who overthrew Babylon and founded a monarchy which comprehended nearly the whole of Asia.

Now each of these great and predominant empires, the Babylonian, the Assyrian, the Persian, had subjected most of the smaller kingdoms of which you read in scripture to the payment of tribute: they did not interfere with those kingdoms in other respects—it was enough for the imperial monarchs of the East to extort from the smaller sovereignties a recognition of their supreme power, and a contribution to the imperial treasury.

Among these states was that DAMASCUS of which there is such frequent and interesting mention in the Bible—Damascus which alarmed even the fearless David; which was captured by Jeroboam; and finally (being brought into contest between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel), was taken by Tiglath Pile-

* "It is not necessary, in relating this part of the Jewish history, to plunge into the intricate and inextricable labyrinth of Assyrian history and chronology. It is unimportant whether we suppose, with Prideaux and most of the earlier writers, that the fatal night which terminated the life of Belshazzar, witnessed the fall of Babylon, and that Darius the Mede was Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus: or with Larcher and others, that Belshazzar was overthrown, and put to death, by a conspiracy within the city, headed by Darius, a man of Median extraction; and that from this Darius opens a new dynasty of Babylonian kings, which ended in the Persian conquest by Cyrus.

"At all events, the close of the seventy years' Captivity found Cyrus the undisputed monarch of all the territories, or rather of a more extensive and powerful Empire than that of Assyria."—Milman, 'History of the Jews,' Book ix.

ser the Assyrian monarch, and became from that time a mere tributary province. But this city is still more endeared to us by the later associations of the New Testament. Here it was that Paul, the grand Apostle of the Gentiles, was converted to the faith that he was destined to spread over the heathen world, "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And still this City of Gardens blooms up from the plain of Syria in the preservation of its marvellous beauty; you pass for days along chains of dreary hills, until there bursts on your sight—here a forest of almond trees, oranges, citrons, and apricots—there a thick plantation of rose trees, from which is made the celebrated attar of roses, with four or five small rivers glittering through the intervals of flower and fruits—and, clear against the warm purple sky, rise the domes and minarets of Damascus. And when you enter the city you are on ground still sacred by beautiful traditions—you are in the street, still called "Straight," where St Paul is said to have lived—you still see, in a tower to the east, the window from which the apostle escaped in a basket the death which threatened him—and still on the road between Damascus and Jerusalem is shown the spot in which, as Saul journeyed, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" This city yet remains amongst the most flourishing of the East—its bazaars swarm with life—the beauties of the harems recline amidst the trellises of vines and roses:——

But farther on—what rises on your eye? A dead disburied city of tombs and sepulchres. In a valley of red sandstone—Mount Hor and Mount Sinai rising grey at the distance—lies this strange skeleton of the city that was founded by Esau, called SELAH, and subsequently PETRA, that is, the "City of the Rock." This was the capital of the Edom which you so often read of in Scripture. And here, amidst monuments of all ages, still stands, on the summit of a mountain, the supposed tomb of Aaron the brother of Moses. Here, too, are still the remains of a temple, of a palace; the rocks are hollowed into innumerable

chambers, and nothing can equal the magical effect of the brilliant colours of the rocks in which those monuments are formed. A traveller says, "that these colours are seen in successive layers of every shade and hue, as brilliant and soft as they ever appear in flowers, or in the plumage of birds, or in the sky when illuminated by the most glorious sunset." Such are the remains of the city and the mount of Esau; and thus are fulfilled the prophecies, "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock,"—"I laid the mountains of Esau and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

But now we approach a country that not only appeals to our more sacred associations, but has a vital claim upon our notice as the earliest parent of commerce and maritime enterprise—a people whose merchants visited our own shores, and whose blood still flows, perhaps, in the veins of one portion of the Irish population. I speak of the country called PHŒNICIA. It is remarkable that the most celebrated commercial countries in history have been comparatively small in extent. Commerce is, in fact, the successful attempt of human energies against the boundaries of space. Along a short line of the eastern coast of Asia, at most 120 miles in length and nowhere twenty miles wide, bounded by the mountains of Libanus and Antilibanus, once arose, close to each other, a succession of stately cities and crowded seaports. There flourished SIDON, called even in the time of Joshua "the Great Zidon;" and there was the mighty TYRE. All these cities and this coast belonged to the people called the Phœnicians, who were closely allied to the Jewish race and spoke a dialect of the same language. The character of a people is always influenced by its geographical situation. This people at a very early period in the dispersion of races, having obtained possession of a sea-coast at the extremity of the Mediterranean, proffering singular advantage of harbours and commerce, would naturally be tempted to maritime adventure. The mountains around them were covered with forests, the forests supplied them with timber for ships—the earth teemed with the useful metals of iron and copper, these gave

them the materials for mechanical art—a kind of fish that abounded on the coasts furnished a brilliant purple dye, the celebrated Tyrian purple—and the sands on the sea-shore were well adapted to the fabric of glass. Thus you see that on the intelligence of this people had been forced, as it were, the elements of navigation, interchange, and manufacture. But commerce always tends to produce liberty; and another reason for the astonishing energy of these Phœnician traders was, that they were under forms of government infinitely more free than the surrounding despotisms of the East. To them indeed we are still largely indebted. They left colonies in Africa, in Sicily, in Spain, in Great Britain, in Gaul (or France), and in Ireland. Above all, they are said to have been the inventors of letters, of the alphabet; for this, which seems to us so simple and natural an invention, was long unknown among the earlier nations: and thus the alphabet, and possibly even the plain rules of arithmetic, which your children learn at this day by the knees of some English mother, are derived from the inhabitants of that remote and narrow sea-shore; and it is to the children of Tyre that I owe the very letters in which I read to you of their grandeur and their ruin. There was an Old Tyre and a New Tyre. Old Tyre was besieged for thirteen years by Nebuchadnezzar; during the blockade the inhabitants took refuge in a neighbouring island, which ultimately, under the name of New Tyre, far exceeded the opulence of the Old. This New Tyre was captured by Alexander the Great. Nothing in Scripture is more startling than the fulfilment of the prophecies of Ezekiel, concerning the capture and the fate of Tyre. For Alexander the Great took the city (which as I have said was on an island) by constructing a wall or causeway across the sea, with the ruins of the old city and the timber of Mount Libanus. And thus runs the prophecy: "And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water; and thou shalt be no more!" And again the prophet says of Tyre, that it "should be as the top of a rock for fishers to dry their nets on." And thus writes Bruce the traveller: "Passing by Tyre two wretched fishermen, with miserable nets, have just given over their occupation, with very

little success. I engaged them at the expense of their nets to drag in those places where they said shell-fish might be caught, in hopes to have brought out one of the famous purple fish." The attempt was in vain.

And here, on taking leave of these Phœnician states, so connected with the origin of modern civilisation, pardon me if I pause to make some remarks that appear to me applicable to all countries and all ages. I have said that "Commerce is the successful attempt of human energies against the boundaries of space." Unfortunately, however, where, in the progress of this grand attempt, a state so disproportions its foreign commerce to its natural strength as to become mainly dependent upon the foreigner not only for the luxuries but the necessaries of life, all history, ancient and modern, tells us that it prepares a rapid way to its own inevitable decline: the national spirit becomes relaxed—the desire of liberty grows subordinate to the desire of gain. In such states, the trading capital, as well as the reproductive power of the country, rests so entirely upon artificial foundations, that with the first shock of some internal revolution, or with the first signal defeat in war, the power is shaken, and the flow of the trading capital is at once cut off from its sources. Thus the whole system falls at once into ruins, which no skill and no time can ever permanently restore.

Let me bring this ancient truth home to you by modern examples. France has an immense territory which suffices to a formidable population; it relies chiefly upon resources within itself—not only for the necessaries but even the luxuries of life; it has appropriated to its own soil the silkworm of China, the tobacco plant of America, the vines of Italy; it makes even from betroot a substitute for the sugar-cane of the tropics. And, therefore, whatever the follies or errors of its political government, though it be threatened with war, though it be maddened by revolutions, the physical existence of France thus complete in itself, recovers and survives every shock it receives. Not so Genoa, not so Venice, not so Holland,—all states the splendour of which was purely derived from foreign interchange. If England, which holds together its vast maritime and colonial empire

by the finest and most delicate threads, which derives its monied capital from a thousand distant and complicated resources, were once to undergo such domestic convulsions or such invading wars on its own soil as France has known—all that artificial capital which now employs so many million hands, but which rests its sole security upon public confidence and public order, would suddenly melt away; all that power over the ends of the earth which is maintained, not by the might of our arms, but the belief in our wisdom, would suddenly snap asunder: and England could no more recover herself from such a paralysis of all the organs of her intricate vitality, than Sidon could again see the caravans of the East pass through her ruined gates or Tyre exchange in her desolate markets the wheat of Egypt for the gold of Ophir.

But we must resume our survey of the Past. I now carry you on from Tyre to Egypt; I shall then return to sum up the general history of the East, which we have still left under the rule of Cyrus—give a brief outline of the character, government and religion of the early Oriental nations—and conclude with a view of Jerusalem and the chosen people of Jehovah.

Many scholars have overestimated the antiquity of EGYPT as a social and civilised state. Egypt was unquestionably very ancient, but certainly less ancient than the states of Nineveh and Babylon. And this appears at a glance, if we exert our common sense. The countries in which men would first settle, are, as we have seen, those in which they could obtain the most subsistence with the least labour: this was the character of Babylonia, and could not have been the character of Egypt when the first colonisers came there. On the contrary, the land of Egypt is one vast triumph of Art over the elements of Nature; and men must, therefore, have been already considerably skilled in the arts of civilisation, when they resolved to settle in the land. Egypt itself is within the limits of Africa, but there is good reason to suppose that the Egyptians were of Asiatic origin. We may therefore presume that an Asiatic tribe—expelled from its native home by war or by want—emigrated into the valley of the Nile. Now Egypt is enclosed by two chains of rocks,

between which the Nile precipitates itself; to the right are wide deserts—to the left uninhabitable sands. Such a valley would have presented to emigrants, already skilled in mechanical arts, a favourable spot for settlement: the soil was fertile, but it is overflowed for four months every year by the Nile; the land could only be redeemed by cutting canals to receive the overflow. But we have seen that the people by the plains of Babylon were accustomed to the construction of canals and reservoirs; and the difficulties of controlling the Nile, though far greater than those of curbing the Euphrates, would not have seemed insuperable to emigrants from Babylonia. These difficulties once mastered, Egypt became habitable, and would soon rise to considerable civilisation. Colonisers civilise much more rapidly than the inhabitants of the native country: for instance, it took us, Englishmen, more than a thousand years to have glass windows to our houses, and shirts to our backs; but if a party of English emigrants go and settle in the wilds of Australia, I need scarcely say that their houses will have windows, and their wardrobes will contain shirts. Therefore Egypt, once colonised by a skilful and industrious tribe, would soon rise into a civilisation equal to that of the parent state. The soil once saved from the marshes by dams and canals, the river itself so prepares that soil for culture that the husbandman has only to scatter the seed. Agriculture, in all inland countries, is the origin of wealth. Egypt was the great granary for corn; it lay in the neighbourhood of the land of gold and spices; it commanded Asia on the one hand—Africa on the other: hence it was naturally fitted to be a chief seat of the inland trade of the East. Accordingly, at a very early period of the world (though far less ancient than the date of Babylon), the patriarch Abraham finds a luxurious and gorgeous monarchy established in Egypt.

The History of the Egyptians may be divided into three great eras.

First—from the earliest times, on to those in which it is visited by Abraham, down to that in which Joseph becomes chief minister. Then you find in the first chapter of Exodus, after

Joseph died, that there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph. Who and what was this new king? Why, during this interval the land had been overrun and conquered by a wandering race, probably the Bedouin Arabs, and called the Shepherd Kings; and the chief of this race founded a new dynasty "which knew not Joseph."* These kings set task-masters over the Jews, and they built for Pharaoh treasure cities. Here I should say that Pharaoh was the general title which the Egyptians gave to their kings, as Czar or Cæsar is the general title the Russians give to their emperors. This dynasty—which did not conquer all Egypt, but rather rent it into two monarchies, Upper and Lower Egypt—lasted between two and three hundred years, and was then expelled.

The second period comprises the most brilliant age of Egyptian power. It comprehends the great conqueror Sesostris and his race of Pharaohs; during this period the great monuments of Thebes were probably erected; and about this time that which emphatically distinguished the character of the Egyptian people was completed. I mean the division into castes, as is now the case in India—the caste of priests, of soldiers, of agriculturists, trades, shepherds, &c. Every man followed the calling of his father—no man could ever rise above his caste. I need not tell you that, while this policy, if so it is to be called, insures a certain mechanical precision in the arts and a certain durability to forms of government, it excludes all originality, all progress, all true liberty, and all generous sentiment in social life. Therefore, from this time the Egyptians remain stationary; they reach a certain point of civilisation—they never go beyond it. They never rise to the glorious beauty of Greek art—they leave us monuments of stone, but none of literature. Other nations borrowed from them, and advanced on what they borrowed—the Egyptians condemned themselves never to advance!

Therefore, in the third period of their history, we find the Egyptian monarchy already nodding to its decline. And the

* Heeren's hypothesis is here adopted. But the date for the Shepherd Kings is extremely disputable.

rise of the Persian Cyrus is the sign of a conqueror, who shall avenge on the Pharaoh and his priests the sufferings and bondage of the Israelites.

Those vast structures still existing, called the Pyramids—and that art of embalming the dead, which gives to our curious sight the mummies of those who, three thousand years ago, laughed, wept, lived, and loved, like ourselves—both had their origin in a peculiar doctrine of the Egyptian religion. The Egyptians believed—not in the immortality of the soul, but that the soul existed as long as the body remained: hence their special care for the preservation of the mortal remains—hence their skill in embalment. The body being thus preserved, the next consideration would obviously be, to deposit it in some sacred receptacle most secure from time and decay: hence then the pyramids were constructed for the bodies of kings and priestly chiefs, upon the most durable of all architectural principles. Little could those stately Pharaohs have dreamed that an age would come, when the travellers from a northern isle, whose very existence was unknown to them, would penetrate the labyrinthine chambers of those solemn piles—seize upon the sacred coffins—transport them to distant shores—unrol to the eyes of the profane the effigies of the royal dead—and bare, as a public show, the brows before which nations had bowed in homage!

But we must now pass back from Egypt and return to Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, and the new monarch of the East. Cyrus was a politician as well as a conqueror: he succeeded in establishing an organisation of the various sections of his vast empire; he placed the collection of tribute on a regular basis, and enforced it by standing armies; he was severe but not cruel; he restored the Jewish captives of Babylon to their country. But his manners, and those of his Persian soldiers, became corrupted by the luxury of the Medes with whom they were united. After extending his empire to the Indus, he was engaged in a war with rude and wandering tribes, inhabiting the steppes of central Asia, and fell in battle. He was succeeded by Cambyses, who conquered Egypt, persecuted its priests, and insulted its worship. Dark intrigues were formed in the seraglio

with a view of restoring the Median dynasty; Cambyses was murdered, or fell by accident. An impostor, who pretended to be his brother, a sort of eastern Perkin Warbeck, was placed by the priests or magi on the throne; seven Persian nobles conspired against him, penetrated the seraglio, and slew him. And as the race of Cyrus was extinct, one of these nobles, named Darius the First, was elected to the empire.

This reign lasted thirty-six years, and was the most flourishing period of the Persian empire. Indeed Darius was a man of masterly genius, and a perfect king according to the notions of the East. He divided the kingdom into twenty satrapies or vice-royalties; he placed the royal finances on a solid basis; he established the first rude elements of a post-office—that is, he employed couriers to travel night and day from end to end of his enormous empire, in order to communicate to the various satraps and officers the commands of the great king. To his reign we may refer the most splendid buildings of Persepolis, still extant. He invited Europeans to his court—received their exiles with munificent favour—and profited by their intellect and counsels. But this intercourse with Europeans occasioned the downfall of the Persian empire. On the borders of this great empire lay the country of Greece, the nearest and the fairest territory of Europe. Greek colonies had sprung up on the opposite coast of Asia Minor; these colonies, which were rich and flourishing, Darius resolved to subject to tribute. In this attempt his ambition became enlarged; he desired also to render tributary to his throne the free states of Greece itself. Athens, one of the Greek states, had expelled a tyrant—Darius ordered the Athenians to receive him back. The Athenians refused either to receive a domestic tyrant, or to acknowledge tribute to a foreign king. What was Athens then? A small city, in a small territory not larger than an English county—with a population of free citizens not exceeding, by the largest estimate, 20,000. But Athens resolved to be free. And Freedom gave to its sons a power that could cope with all the armies of the East. Darius died at the commencement of his ambitious projects; his young son, Xerxes, led into Greece myriads of men,

that are said to have exhausted even great rivers on their march. It were too long now to enumerate those glorious conflicts: suffice it to say that the bulk of the invaders perished by land and by sea; their remnants were chased from the soil, escaping the sword, but dying in thousands and tens of thousands by fatigue and famine.

Then, flushed with the victory of freedom and intellect over numbers and brute force, rose Greece in all her imperishable splendour—a splendour not like that of Oriental courts, in mighty palaces and armies of gorgeous slaves, but a splendour of poetry and art, of science, of grand thoughts and sublime inventions, of which at this day we are the inheritors. You can scarcely name anything which attests some triumph of genius and knowledge but what unconsciously you speak Greek: Astronomy—Geography—Philosophy—Poetry—Music—Architecture—the Drama—Tragedy—Comedy—History—all are Greek words, showing the language from which you derive the wondrous learning that distinguishes the civilised man from the barbarian.

The history of Greece is the history of the Human Mind; it is also the record of every experiment in civil government—of Monarchy, Aristocracy, Democracy—of all the strife of parties which divides us at this day. The history of the East, when we leave the sacred records and explore the profane, is like a marvel and a fable—remote, unfamiliar; interesting because it appeals to our imagination like a tale of fairy land. But the history of Greece is for ever modern—it must be the manual and text-book of real statesmen to the end of time. And, alas, short indeed was the duration of the brilliant and flourishing state of Greece crowded as it is with the deeds of heroes, and radiant with intellectual light. Greece fell, a suicide as it were by her own hand—fell by the wild divisions of parties in her different states—fell by the contests between aristocracy and democracy—fell by the licence which followed the brief success of each contest—fell, finally, by abuse of the divine heritage of freedom, and by reckless tamperings with an eminently artful and complicated system, which had raised small

states into great nations, but which crumbled away when statesmen could only act according to the impatience, the caprice, and the fickle violence of the popular mobs to which they were forced to appeal.

And just at the time when the Greek states were thus divided and enfeebled, there arose an able and subtle king in a country bordering Greece, and called Macedon. This king, whose name was Philip, desired to place himself at the head of Greece; and where he could not invade the states, he sought to corrupt the statesmen. He had already succeeded in undermining the independence of Greece, when he fell by the hand of an assassin; and was succeeded by his son, who was yet but a boy. That boy was Alexander the Great. Perhaps nature never endowed one human being with gifts so numerous and so dazzling, as were combined in this young prince of Macedon. And education had done all to accomplish and perfect what nature had bestowed. In war he had learned his art from his father Philip, the most scientific general of the age; in arts and letters he had been the pupil of the famous Aristotle, whose mind embraced the whole range of knowledge, whether in the phenomena of nature or the experience of life and the lore of government. To an intellect thus carefully tutored, Alexander added a boundless enthusiasm and fire of soul. He had, as a child, the same passion for glory and disdain of fear, which we find in the anecdotes of our own Nelson. He slept with the poems of Homer under his pillow—he dreamed of heroes, and waked to read of them. His form was fitted to the activity of his mind—he was small and slight, but of extraordinary agility and strength—he could ride the wild horse which no one else could approach with safety, and the wild horse became his docile charger Bucephalus. On foot he could outrun the swiftest; he was asked to run at the Olympian games—"Yes," said he, "provided my competitors are the sons of kings." He had all the generosity which attaches men to their leaders: once, in dividing the spoils of conquest, he portioned the whole among his followers—"What have you left for yourself?" asked one of his generals; "Hope," said Alexander. He had two great faults, in the midst of so

many sublime qualities of valour, genius, learning, generosity, and consummate practical intelligence; those two faults were an irascible temper and an inordinate self-esteem. Such was the youth, who at the age of twenty ascended the throne of a small mountainous half-civilised region called Macedon; such was the wondrous hero whom Providence reared and reserved for the revolution of Asia, but for the preservation of Europe.

For when Alexander, after spending two years in assuring his own kingdom, and confirming his power in Greece, resolved to invade Persia, he is not to be regarded as a mere reckless conqueror—as, what the poet has called him, a glorious "madman;" on the contrary, his enterprise was dictated by the most profound and far-seeing wisdom. Although the Persians had suffered, under Xerxes, such disastrous defeat in their attempt on Greece, the danger was not over. The Persian kings never resigned their ambitious hope of annexing Greece to their throne. They intrigued with the various states, fomented the divisions of party, tendered the most magnificent bribes to powerful traitors and discontented chiefs. At any time might rise some bolder or abler Oriental despot, who, having absolute command over the myriads whom he ruled, might again pour into Greece; and Greece, alas, had no longer the manhood and public virtue which could resist both the iron and the gold. If Greece were once conquered, the key to Europe would be gained —and what boundary then to the ambition of the Persian king? If Alexander had not arisen, all Europe at this day might be under the yoke of Oriental slavery.

It was not then with the intention merely to conquer Persia, that Alexander, 334 years before Christ, at the head of a comparative handful of men (about 35,000), marched into the plains of Asia; he entertained a far grander design; he saw that neither Greece nor Europe was safe, while that Oriental despotism existed close on the frontiers; and he cherished the sublime idea, not of overrunning and devastating the Persiam realm, but of changing the whole polity and character of the East—in one word, of converting Asia to the civilisation of Europe. I cannot follow him through his dazzling progress; but wherever he went,

he conquered, and wherever he conquered, he attempted to civilise; if he destroyed, he reconstructed; he founded everywhere new cities, with a marvellous eye to trade and commerce. At this day, when the old cities of Egypt are ruins, the city of Alexandria, which has its origin in his genius, is the most flourishing in Egypt. Finally, after campaigns which included that part of India called the Punjab, now under the English dominion, he resolved to settle on the site of the dismantled and ruinous Babylon. His eye of king and of statesman recognised in that spot, where the earliest city of the world had arisen, the fittest and most central place for the capital of the known universe. Here he resolved to fortify his superb metropolis, and here, in the vanity of human desires, he intended to place, as his bride, the daughter of the last of the Persian kings, whose sceptre had passed into his mighty hands. But the Divine Curse still rested upon Babylon; and the Disposer of kingdoms had ordained that there should be no throne for "the daughter of the Chaldæans." In draining the marshes, and tracing the new walls round the city, Alexander was seized with a disease which perplexed the ancient historians—but which the late Sir Henry Halford, in a lecture to the College of Physicians, proves to have been pleurisy—and died after a short illness. And so, if I may translate a Greek epitaph, upon this astonishing hero, "Six feet of earth to-day are too wide for him—for whom yesterday the whole world was too narrow." Still the constructive nature of Alexander's intellect showed itself; and still, though his general design was but imperfectly begun, its fragments sufficed to change the whole character of Asia. That quarter of the globe was no more united under one Eastern despot; it was broken up and divided amongst the generals of Alexander. New monarchies under European dynasties thus arose, including even the mysterious Egypt; and the history of Asia soon melts away into the history of Rome, which finally subdued the Macedonian monarchies into Roman provinces.

Thus, Gentlemen, I have given you a brief outline of the general history of the Ancient East, from the building of Baby-

lon, to the fall of the Persian empire by the arms of Alexander, about 300 years before Christ.

We must now take a rapid survey of the general character of these ancient monarchies, and we shall see at once the natural causes of their downfall.

But first I must point out to you, as a most remarkable and interesting fact, that, from the very earliest period, we find in the East cities of such splendour and nations possessed of such knowledge of the arts, as we nowhere can perceive in the modern East. A very few centuries after the received date of the deluge, we discover that men were acquainted with all the elements of the social state, resided in vast communities, had constructed buildings of prodigious architectural magnificence, were necessarily acquainted with mechanics, with the exact sciences, with the fine arts of painting and sculpture, with manufactures of silk and tapestry, works in gems and precious metals. And when we consider how many ages it has taken any modern nation, including our own, to advance beyond the first stage of barbarism—even to the inhabiting of rude villages, and the construction of clay huts and garments of hide,—this startling fact seems to open us a glimpse of the World before the Flood; it leads us to infer that the children of Noah left behind them, in the devouring waters, the ruins of some perished civilisation—that even now, hurled beneath the roots of Alpine rocks or under the fathomless caves of the ocean, lie the fragments of cities which had heard the harp and organ of Jubal, and gleamed with brass the artificers of which had been instructed by Tubal Cain. And, indeed, we may well suppose that the hands which built the ark of gopher wood, that floated over the roaring deep, might be skilled in many a craft and many an art, which still connects the family of man with the mystic race before the deluge.

Next, when we look over all these early governments of the East, we find them all characterised by absolute despotism—absolute power of the sovereign over the actions and lives of his subjects. Such a power would grow naturally out of the earliest condition of wandering men; for the first authority is the Pater-

nal. Suppose a man leading his children from pasture to pasture, with his flocks and herds—he would naturally exercise absolute authority over these children. Again, suppose that he settles in some situation, where the pastures are fertile and the fountains are pure; and suppose some other stragglers come up, and not being strong enough to expel the first settler, ask his permission to dwell in the same place; his natural answer would be, "Yes, provided you always acknowledge my authority and obey my will" Thus the despotic power of the father over his family would gradually extend over a clan; and still, as the circle increased by settlement or conquest, still you see the character of the first authority would remain absolute. This seems to me the origin of that despotic monarchy which we find everywhere established in the early history of the world. And this, which first cemented the infant bonds of society, would finally rot them away. As clans became nations and patriarch chiefs became mighty kings, so all ties of affection and family that first softened the despotic character would disappear. The monarch would behold, with supreme indifference or disdain, the human thousands submitted to his will; and hence arose that singular inhumanity, that contempt of life, which characterised alike all those ancient kings—sacrificing their slaves, now to the construction of the palaces and monuments of their pride, and now to wild and ferocious invasions of neighbouring principalities.

The next feature in these monarchies is, that always in proportion to their splendour and luxury was their frightful corruption in manners. And this arose, partly from the circumstance that all the refining influences of knowledge, all those intellectual pursuits which occupy time so harmlessly and so calmly, where wholly monopolised by the priests: in all these empires the priests alone arrogated knowledge, and kept it to themselves as a power over both king and people.

Another cause of corruption is to be traced in the universal disregard for the natural law of marriage, which has always existed in the East. The law that binds the one man to the one woman, is so indelibly written by Nature, that wherever it is

violated on general system, the human race is found to deteriorate both in mind and in form. The ennobling influences of women cease: the wife is a companion—a hundred wives are but a hundred slaves. Nor is this all: unless man look to woman as a treasure to be wooed and won—her smile the charm of his existence—her single heart the range of his desires—that which deserves the name of Love cannot exist, it is struck out of the healthful system of society. Now if there be a passion in the human breast, which most tends to lift us out of egotism and self—which most teaches us to live in another—which purifies and warms the whole mortal being—it is love, as we of the North hold and cherish it. For even when the fair spring of youth has passed, and when the active life of man is employed in such grave pursuits, that the love of his early years seems to him like a dream of romance; still that love, having once lifted him out of egotism into sympathy, does but pass into new forms and development—it has unlocked his heart to charity and benevolence—it gives a smile to his home—it rises up in the eyes of his children—from his hearth it circulates insensibly on, to the laws which protect the hearth, to the native land which spreads around it. Thus, in the uniform history of the world, we discover that wherever love is created, as it were, and sanctioned, by that equality between the sexes, which the permanent and holy union of one heart with another heart proclaims; there, too, patriotism, liberty—the manly and the gentle virtues —also find their place: and wherever, on the contrary, polygamy is practised, and love disappears in the gross satiety of the senses; there, we find neither respect for humanity, nor reverence for home, nor affection for the natal soil. And one reason why Greece so contrasted in all that dignifies our nature the effeminate and dissolute character of the East which it overthrew, is, that Greece was the earliest civilised country in which, on the borders of those great monarchies, marriage was the sacred tie between the one man and the one woman—and man was the thoughtful father of a home, not the wanton lord of a seraglio.

A third feature of these Eastern states was their idolatry and

the debasing superstitions which subjected the multitude to their priests. Now it may seem at first strange that, so soon after the deluge, we find the sublime and almost self-evident notion of the One Divine maker and ruler of heaven and earth, so darkly disappearing amidst the most strange conceits, and the most preposterous and grotesque absurdities. That men, wise enough to build such cities as Babylon or Thebes, should be dolts enough to worship a golden calf or a hideous crocodile, appears such a perversion of understanding as to be almost incredible.

But let us look to the origin of these idolatrous religions, and we shall see what were their sources, and how they gradually arose. When the races of men were scattered, and their original language was confused and split up into various tongues, after the vain attempt to build the tower of Babel, we can readily conceive how the grand idea of the One Supreme Being, revealed in Paradise to Adam, would become shadowy and obscure. The very confusion of languages would alone suffice to confuse the ideas. But still the notion of some divine powers beyond mortality, and influencing the intricate mechanism of events and the destinies of man, universally remained. Now we have seen that the first settlers possessed themselves of the broad and level plains of Babylonia or Chaldæa; there, the nights are singularly cool and serene, and after the heats of the day invite to contemplation rather than to sleep. These plains, and this atmosphere, were especially calculated to the study of the stars; the Chaldæans thus became the earliest astronomers, and towers intended for observatories were among the first buildings they erected. They soon perceived the influence of the heavenly bodies upon the seasons of the year, and began naturally to exaggerate that influence, till astronomy led to astrology—that is, into the belief that the stars ruled the fate of nations and the actions of men. Thus, nearly all sound philosophers are agreed, that the earliest idolatry was the worship of the stars, the moon, or the sun. But as there is always in man a disposition to represent to the external sense what he conceives in the inward mind, so these star-worshippers next sought to create symbols or

images of the powers they held to be thus predominant over the earth. Thus the signs of the zodiac were signified by images of a lion, a bull, a ram, a crab, &c.; and the habit of using hieroglyphic or picture-writing would render this mode of representing philosophical ideas by actual forms and embodiments familiar to the ordinary populace. Then and thus would arise graven images—meant originally by the sages and priests as symbols of the powers of nature, but which soon became adored by the multitude as if they were divine in themselves. The priests probably found that this was an easier mode of sustaining the popular faith and enriching the temples than they could find by teaching scientific problems which the mere vulgar would be far too ignorant to understand. Any blockhead could worship a golden calf; but it required a very intelligent mind to understand that a golden calf was but a sign of some natural phenomenon, or a type of some celestial influence. Thus the idolatry of images became the second form of false worship; it was common with the people, and though despised, still encouraged, by the wiser priests. Various artful impostures of chemistry or mechanism would soon invest such images with miraculous powers; and as fire amongst flax, so is superstition amidst enthusiastic ignorance. Now, just as this idolatry prevailed universally through the East, we find the Almighty guarding, in one chosen race, the sublime belief in One Maker of heaven and earth, whose likeness is in no graven image; and bearing up as it were in a second Ark, over the deluge of heathen darkness, the destined fathers of the Christian world. And it is only in proportion as you can notice how stubborn, strong, and universal was idolatry throughout the East, amongst all the tribes and nations, through which the Jewish people wandered, by whom they were led into captivity, with whom they held trade and intercourse,—that you can perceive how marvellous a thing it was, that that Jewish people, notwithstanding their backslidings and aberrations, still clung fast as a race to the idea of the One God. For this, Providence gave them laws, governments, opinions, wholly distinct and different from those of any other states in the then existent world. They

were indeed, whatever their errors, justified in their boast, that they were the one people under the special protection of the Most High; for they were the only people in whom the Most High preserved, as in a sanctuary, the idea of the One Creator and the Eternal Father.

The history of the Jewish people is to be divided into three periods.

The first under Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in which the Jews appear as a wandering pastoral family, which increased, during its subjection to the Pharaohs of Egypt, to twelve tribes. The Pharaohs wish them to build and inhabit cities—this is contrary to their free and roving habits; they fly from Egypt, led by Moses, and under him and Joshua, conquer Palestine the Land of Promise. The Philistines, with whom you find the Jews often engaged, are the warlike inhabitants of Palestine whom they subdue, but never thorougly extirpate. This period spreads from two thousand years to fifteen hundred years before Christ (that is, five centuries).

The second period is that of a federative republic; each tribe has its separate patriarch—the cities are governed by magistrates. This period comprises the Book of Judges. Samuel re-established the worship of Jehovah; the people desired a king—Saul is appointed. This period occupies about four centuries, from fifteen hundred to eleven hundred years before Christ.

The third period is that of the monarchy—the nation becomes great and formidable under David, who, independently of his sacred character, was a man of genius for action and command, equal to his dauntless valour. He conquers Syria and Idumæa; he extends a kingdom, hitherto insignificant, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, from Phœnicia to the Red Sea; he reigns thirty-three years; and the reign of his successor, Solomon, is that of the most splendid and flourishing period of the Hebrew history. At the close of Solomon's life, decay begins to be apparent; the admixture of strange gods demoralises the whole state. After his death the Jewish people are rent into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. Their stormy history and mournful close are familiar to you all.

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, terminates the kingdom of Israel 722 years before Christ, and transplants the inhabitants to Media.

Nebuchadnezzar conquers Judah, 588 years before Christ, and leads the scattered remnant of its inhabitants to captivity in Babylon.

Here, with the extinction of their freedom, the loss of their very land, other nations would have been erased from the globe. Not so the Jews; even in captivity, they tower above the sons of men—they are not prisoners, they are prophets. Amidst the pomp of Babylon, the exiled Jew is still grander than the king upon his throne. Here Ezekiel awes the East with his inspired visions, here Daniel interprets the mystic characters on the wall, and dooms the empire of Belshazzar to the Medes and Persians. And amidst all the terrors of that awful night, when Belshazzar was weighed in the balance, when the river was turned from its channel, when the hosts of Cyrus poured into the fated city—the Jews but beheld the fulfilment of the prophecies of Jeremiah—the period of seventy years, foretold as the term of captivity, was at an end. And Cyrus, who was the destroyer of Babylon, was the deliverer of Israel. Cyrus restored the Jews to their ruined city; some indeed remained in Babylon, but more than 40,000 returned; they regain Jerusalem, and their first task was to rebuild the temple of Jehovah. Now it is from this period that we see how Providence prepared the way for the coming of our Saviour. For now the hope of a Messiah, which had existed indeed, though dimly, from immemorial ages, became far more popularly held, and more insisted upon by inspired writers. Now, too, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul became more solemnly and distinctly announced; you see it set forth in the visions of Ezekiel, and in the last chapters of Daniel. Nothing is ever sudden in the ways of Heaven; it prepares the souls of men to receive its *light*, long before the flash bursts upon their eyes.

After the death of Alexander the Great, Palestine became annexed to the Syrian kingdom; new captivities, oppressions, conquests, ensued. The Maccabees, a race of heroes, asserted and

for a time regained the independence of the Hebrew kingdom; subsequently, it fell under the yoke of the Roman state, which now indeed spread its dominion over the known globe. Herod, governor of Galilee, a man of great ambition and abilities, gained the favour of Augustus, and established a new throne in Jerusalem: in the last years of his reign—according to some the very last year, but probably four years previously—is the date of our Saviour's birth. The sons of Herod had neither his talents nor his fortunes; six years after the birth of our Lord, Judæa and Samaria became a Roman province, under subordinate governors, the most famous of whom was Pontius Pilate. These governors became so oppressive that the Jews broke out into rebellion; and seventy years after Christ, Jerusalem was finally besieged by Titus, afterwards emperor of Rome. No tragedy on the stage has the same scenes of appalling terror as are to be found in the history of this siege The city itself was rent by factions at the deadliest war with each other—all the elements of civil hatred had broken loose—the streets were slippery with the blood of citizens—brother slew brother—the granaries were set on fire—famine wasted those whom the sword did not slay. In the midst of these civil massacres, the Roman armies appeared before the walls of Jerusalem. Then for a short time the rival factions united against the common foe; they were again the gallant countrymen of David and Joshua—they sallied forth and scattered the eagles of Rome. But this triumph was brief; the ferocity of the fated Jews soon again wasted itself on each other. And Titus marched on—encamped his armies close by the walls—and from the heights, the Roman general gazed with awe on the strength and splendour of the city of Jehovah.

Let us here pause, and take, ourselves, a mournful glance at Jerusalem, as it then was. The city was fortified by a triple wall, save on one side, where it was protected by deep and impassable ravines. These walls, of the most solid masonry, were guarded by strong towers; opposite to the loftiest of these towers Titus had encamped. From the height of that tower the sentinel might have seen stretched below the whole of that

territory of Judæa, about to pass from the countrymen of David. Within these walls was the palace of the kings—its roofs of cedar, its floors of the rarest marbles, its chambers filled with the costliest tapestries, and vessels of gold and silver. Groves and gardens gleaming with fountains and adorned with statues of bronze, divided the courts of the palace itself. But high above all rose the temple, upon a precipitous rock fortified and adorned by Solomon. This temple was as strong without as a citadel—within, more adorned than a palace. On entering, you beheld porticoes of numberless columns of porphyry, marble, and alabaster; gates adorned with gold and silver, among which was the wonderful gate called the Beautiful. Further on, through a vast arch, was the sacred portal which admitted into the interior of the temple itself—all sheeted over with gold, and overhung by a vine tree of gold, the branches of which were as large as a man. The roof of the temple, even on the outside, was set over with golden spikes, to prevent the birds settling there and defiling the holy dome. At a distance, the whole temple looked like a mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles. But, alas, the veil of that temple had been already rent asunder by an inexpiable crime. And the Lord of hosts did not fight with Israel.

But the enemy is thundering at the wall. All around the city rose immense machines, from which Titus poured down mighty fragments of rock and showers of fire. The walls gave way—the city was entered—the temple itself was stormed. Famine in the meanwhile had made such havoc, that the besieged were more like spectres than living men; they devoured the belts to their swords, the sandals to their feet. Even nature itself so perished away, that a mother devoured her own infant; fulfilling the awful words of the warlike prophet who had first led the Jews towards the Land of Promise—"The tender and delicate women amongst you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness—her eye shall be evil toward her young one and the children which she shall bear, for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine

enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." Still, as if the foe and the famine were not scourge enough, citizens smote and murdered each other as they met in the way—false prophets ran howling through the streets—every image of despair completes the ghastly picture of the fall of Jerusalem. And now the temple itself was set on fire, the Jews rushed through the flames to perish amidst its ruins. It was a calm summer night—the tenth of August; the whole hill on which stood the temple was one gigantic blaze of fire—the roofs of cedar crashed—the golden pinnacles of the dome were like spikes of crimson flame. Through the lurid atmosphere all was carnage and slaughter; the echoes of shrieks and yells rang back from the Hill of Zion and the Mount of Olives. Amongst the smoking ruins, and over piles of the dead, Titus planted the standard of Rome.

Thus were fulfilled the last avenging prophecies—thus perished Jerusalem. In that dreadful day, men still were living who might have heard the warning voice of Him they had crucified: "Verily, I say unto you all, these things shall come upon this generation. . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee, . . . behold your house is left unto you desolate!"[1]

And thus were the Hebrew people scattered over the face of the earth, still retaining to this hour their mysterious identity—still a living proof of the truth of those prophets they had scorned or slain—still vainly awaiting that Messiah, whose divine mission was fulfilled, eighteen centuries ago, upon the Mount of Calvary.

Here I close this history of the earlier East, which rises before you like the ruins of a former world disinterred from the soil—with the strange and romantic splendour of its

> "Cloud-capt towers—its gorgeous palaces—
> Its solemn temples;"

the fragments of a luxurious but rude and imperfect civilisation, in which, amidst the grandeur of kings and the might of

[1] See, for a popular account of the details in this fearful siege, Milman's eloquent 'History of the Jews.' The lover of poetry should not fail to read also the grand drama on the 'Fall of Jerusalem,' by the same author.

cities that seem built for a race of giants, we look in vain for the freedom that alone gives dignity to man, and strength to embattled towers. If we would recognise the source of the purer influence which now prevails over modern civilisation, and trace the origin of that tender humanity, which makes the guiding principle of our milder policy and legislation; which breaks asunder the chain of the slave—covers the land with asylums for poverty and hospitals for disease—imposes a check on the ambition of conquerors—and opens to the sorrows of earth the gates of heaven; if we would recognise the first cause of that benignant influence, we must seek it, not in the pyramids of Egypt, not in the halls of Nineveh—we must pass through the smouldering ruins in which Titus planted the perishable pomp of his Roman eagles—we must pause within the lowly shed to which the star of Bethlehem conducted the princes of the East—we must ascend the hill on which, surviving the relics of imperial power, the trophies of remorseless war, we see in the Saviour's Cross the everlasting signal of peace to earth and good will to man. May this influence, which pervades you all while you hear me, continue to spread with the progress of knowledge, and the expansion of freedom; may it blend with the hope which makes us struggle towards improvement below —the faith which may unite us hereafter as one family above —and the charity which teaches us to forgive even those who oppose us by the way. Wherever we labour or strive, in our private relations, in our public contests, may there still float down to us from the hill that commands the ruins of Jerusalem, those divine accents which summed up all that can save the history of the future from the crimes and horrors of the past, in the simple and touching words, "LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

X.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 10TH OF DECEMBER 1852.

ON Friday, the 10th of December 1852, upon the order in the House of Commons for the Committee of Ways and Means being read, the Member for Finsbury, Mr Thomas Duncombe, threatened to take the sense of the House on the preliminary question that Mr Speaker do now leave the chair. After some discussion the motion was withdrawn, and the Committee duly formed. In the course of the debate thus provoked the following speech was delivered.

SIR,—I shall not follow the hon. gentleman who has just sat down through all the points on which he has touched. It is true that the whole Budget is indirectly open to our consideration; but I do not think it necessary to touch upon those parts on which the House are agreed, such, for instance, as the measures connected with the colonial or the shipping interest, which other gentlemen are far more competent to discuss than I am. With respect to the income and property tax, to which reference has been made by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, the question is so large in itself, and by the Amendment of my hon. friend the Member for Montrose (Mr Hume) it is become so complicated, by a variety, not of details merely, but of principles, that it is impossible now to discuss the ques-

tion fairly, and it must be left to some later occasion, specially set apart for the purpose. But, as in the meanwhile the principal objection to the Government measure in regard to this tax relates to the extension of its area, it may be well for the country to be aware that my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as far as the extension of the area is concerned, has acted not in harsh, but in mitigated conformity with all the most valuable evidence which was given before the Committee on the property tax; and he also acts, as far as that extension is concerned, in conformity with the suggestions of that unquestioned champion of the industrious classes, my hon. friend the Member for Montrose. But I shall not enter into that question to-night, nor into that question which has been raised by my right hon. friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr Gladstone), how far the speech of Mr Pitt can induce this House to believe that it is a fraud upon income derived from the property of the fundholder to diminish the tax upon income derived from profits. I take it for granted that the majority of gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, as well as gentlemen on this side, are agreed upon this, that you can no longer tax in the same proportion an income which a man, without any fault of his own, may lose in a moment, and income which is derived from capital which a man enjoys for his life, and which he may bequeath to his children. But then, let me suggest for a single moment this serious consideration to gentlemen on both sides of the House—for we heard the other night speeches from two gentlemen so pre-eminent in this House that one or other of them must be a leading Member in any Administration which may replace the present—I mean the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, in which he declared that the very distinction which you desire to enforce was a positive dishonesty; and the speech of the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell), in which he declared his apprehension of the great dangers that would accrue if we depart from those principles of the income tax that have been established by successive Parliaments. This is matter for grave reflection, and may sug-

gest to gentlemen on both sides of the House how far by their present vote it may be desirable to destroy the first Government which has ventured to establish a distinction so important to the industrial portion of our constituencies, and to abandon that principle to the hostile feelings, or at any rate to the uncertain mercies and divided counsels, of the gentlemen who may succeed them. And now I shall come to the main question before the House, namely, to the consideration of the indirect duties which it is proposed to reduce, in connection with the house tax, which it is proposed to double. Sir, if any philanthropist desired to confer some special boon upon the industrious classes, the reduction of the duties on malt and tea are precisely those which he would select; and though I have seen it stated in some quarters that it would be better to prefer the reduction of some other excise duties than that on malt, such as the excise duties on paper or soap, yet that is said now by the very parties who have all along up to this period contended that the first articles to be selected for reduction ought to be those affecting the physical sustenance of the people. Now, though certain learned men have gravely informed us that sawdust may be made a very nutritious substitute for potatoes, yet I do not know that any one has ever attempted to induce the people to eat paper or soap. It was said, most forcibly, in a former debate, by the hon. Member for Montrose, that "from whatever source you derive your revenue, you ought not to raise it from the beverage of the working man and the middle classes. The question is one which affects the whole population. You have cheap meat and cheap bread, why should you not also have cheap beer?" These are sentiments worthy of the benevolence of my hon. and respected friend. But a Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot afford to be actuated by benevolence alone; he must indulge his philanthropy only according to the rules of political economy; and, therefore, in the selection of duties for reduction, he must look to those which press most upon the commercial and industrial energies of the country, and the removal of which will tend most to the reproduction of national wealth, and therefore he selects the tea duties because a reduc-

tion of those duties tends at least to augment our trade with China, and to promote the interchange of our goods. Directly the reduction of this tax is a benefit to the consumer, while indirectly it benefits Manchester and Liverpool, the merchants and manufacturers of the country, and we, the country gentlemen, sincerely rejoice to think so. Now let us in the same manner look at the malt tax, because, though it is not directly before the House, yet it is impossible to hear the speech of the hon. Member for Nottingham, and the cheers with which it was received, and it is impossible to read what has been said and written out of doors upon the subject, without perceiving that it is the reduction of the malt-tax, taken in connection with the doubling of the house duty, which is now prominently before the minds of hon. gentlemen opposite. Let us see, then, if the reduction of the malt duties does not proceed upon precisely the same principle as the reduction of the duties on tea. I grant that we shall not obtain anything like a proportionate advantage from the reduction of half the malt-tax that would accrue from its total repeal. I grant that we shall still retain the costly and vexatious machinery of the excise restrictions, and that by retaining half the tax you will still cripple the farmer in the direction of his capital, and in the preparation of malt, whether for fattening his cattle or for brewing his own beer. But what then? It is still a bold step in the right direction. It is so, considering the state of the revenue, and considering the feelings of gentlemen on this side of the House, who never desire to forget the claims and interests of other parties. But I frankly tell my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that so long as a revenue is drawn from this duty, so long as the farmer is impeded in the direction of his industry and capital, so long, hon. gentlemen may rely upon it, will the country party endeavour to obtain for the farmer, through the means of free trade, fair and impartial justice. Still, while I admit this to the hon. gentleman the Member for the North Riding of Yorkshire, and while I agree with his arguments in favour of a total repeal of the malt duty, I would remind him that a diminution in the amount of this tax so far lessens the great financial difficulty of

getting rid of it altogether. But even suppose you were to doubt the benefit of the reduction of this tax to the farmer, surely no one will be absurd enough to deny that the reduction of this tax by one half will cheapen the price of beer—that no monopoly of the brewers can altogether defeat this intention of the Legislature, in the face of public opinion—and that if they should attempt to do so, it would only unite all parties in favour of an alteration in the system of licensing. I remember the hon. Member for Derby (Mr Bass), who is a great practical authority on this subject, and who is the great reformer of the principles of British ale, on a former occasion brought forward a motion for a reduction of the half of this tax, and he rested his whole case on the argument—which he accompanied with his own personal guarantee as an eminent brewer—that the reduction of the half of this tax would give good beer to the people at a more moderate price. I myself, since the Budget, have had an opportunity of speaking to persons eminent in the trade, and their calculation is that a reduction in the tax would cause a reduction in the retail price of superior beer to the extent of a penny a quart. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, but I have a right to my calculation, if you have a right to yours, and do not forget your own arguments with regard to the corn laws. You said, "we do not pretend to fix the point to which the price of bread will be reduced by the repeal: all we can do is to legislate so that our legislation ought to reduce the price." The reduction of the duty on malt, therefore, is the same in principle with the reduction of the duty on tea. It is intended directly as a benefit to the consumer, and indirectly as a benefit to the farmer, just as the reduction of the duty on tea is intended directly as a benefit to the consumer, and indirectly as a benefit to the merchant and manufacturer; and in order to see how far this reduction will benefit the farmer, I shall read to the House a short extract from that great finance and free-trade authority, Mr M'Culloch. He states that though the malt-tax falls directly upon the consumer, "still, however, it must be admitted that indirectly it is an especial injury to the agriculturist;" and he says, "Suppose a high duty were laid upon calicoes and broad cloths, it would

fall upon the consumer, but not the less it would be a serious injury to the manfacturer. In point of fact, a duty of 3½d. per yard was imposed previous to the year 1831 upon printed cottons; it fell directly upon the consumer, but indirectly it was so injurious to the manufacturers that, in consequence of their well-founded representations, the duty, which produced £600,000, was repealed, and the results have been sufficient to testify to the policy of that measure. The case of malt is precisely analogous, and may be stated to show that the injuries produced by a duty on cotton may, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to describe the injuries produced by a duty on malt." Now, it may be said that all this goes to prove the advantages of a total repeal of the malt-tax; but subsequently Mr M'Culloch, despairing of the total repeal, suggests the very measure that is now before the House, namely, a reduction of one-half the duty. But, because this question is accompanied indirectly with benefit to the farmer, and is accompanied by a double house-tax, we are told that this is a question of town against country. No, Sir, it is a question of free trade against restriction: it is a question whether you will attempt to lower the price of an article of popular subsistence—whether you will remove a check which operates directly against an important branch of the industry of the country—and it is accompanied with a direct tax which would be fair and just, and as such is recommended by all political economists, even if it were not accompanied with any reduction of the malt-tax at all. But I suspect that what deprives this reduction in the duty on malt of all merit in the eyes of hon. gentlemen opposite, is the very reason that should induce them to support it, namely, because it removes some weight from that class which has the most cause to dread competition. I fear that if the measure proposed inflicted some new hardships on the agriculturists, and gave to hon. gentlemen opposite a new triumph of class and party—and if all the agriculturists were therefore combined against them, we should hear of nothing but the selfishness of squires and farmers, who refused to cheapen the price of beer for the benefit of their poor countrymen. Better at once support the doctrine that because the farmer con-

tends that he is suffering partial distress, therefore he is not to be impartially relieved; that because in the cultivation of wheat he is subjected to unrestricted competition, therefore his industry is to be fettered in the cultivation of barley. And what is this grain thus selected for fiscal harassment and discouragement? Why, the grain which, above all others, is adapted to the climate and soil of this country. In wheat we are equalled, perhaps excelled, by other countries—in barley we are unrivalled; and this article in which we are unrivalled is the very one which you specially select for impediments in the employment of industry in its most profitable channel. This is more than an injury to the farmer—it is more than a grievance to the consumer—it is a perverse and elaborate rejection of one of the most fertile sources of national wealth which Providence has conferred upon this country. If hon. gentlemen do not object to the malt-tax considered in itself, what is it to which they do object? You say you object to the house-tax being doubled for the benefit of the farmers; but that is simply to say that you object to the further extension of free trade when it operates against the other classes whom you represent. What is it you object to in the house-tax? Do you object to the tax itself? You cannot do that, because it is a tax which has been specially selected by all authorities on the subject as a tax which they would recommend for almost indefinite extension. Mr Mill says, that of all possible taxes a house-tax is one of the fairest, because it falls upon a man in proportion to his expenditure; and Mr M'Culloch, almost anticipating the measure now before the House, years ago advised that we should commute the tea-duties, the more obnoxious excise-duties, nay, half the malt-tax—what for?—for a tax upon houses; and this, too, at a time when the window duties were still in existence. The only point worthy of consideration is that which has been suggested by the hon. Member. But the hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. Williams) suggests that instead of the house-tax we ought to impose the legacy duties upon realised property. Now I frankly own to the hon. gentleman that the feeling out of doors on this subject is so strong, and partly so reasonable, that if you are to continue

these duties at all, sooner or later they must be applied to all descriptions of property. I grant that; but then in return I think you will grant me this—that the question is, which is the best tax of the two? and I think I shall show that on sound financial principles the tax which you propose is infinitely more objectionable in itself than the house-tax. All political economists, and indeed all educated men, agree that taxes ought to fall, not upon capital, but upon expenditure. When a tax falls upon expenditure, you supply a stimulus to the person paying it to make it up in some other way; but when the tax falls on capital, that stimulus is not given, the tax is not made up, and the loss is one which falls upon the very wealth of the nation. But of all taxes upon capital, that which directly taxes capital itself is the worst; and, therefore, Mr Ricardo singles out the legacy duty for unqualified condemnation. His argument, if I remember right, is somewhat this: "Suppose I have a legacy of £1000, and the State takes £100 from me in the shape of a legacy duty; I should only consider that I have received £900, and I have no particular motive to make up the loss by lessening my expenditure. But if I have received a legacy of £1000, and £100 is taken away in a variety of other taxes, such as a tax on house, servants, horses, wine, &c., in all probability I shall decrease my expenditure to that amount, and so the national wealth will remain unimpaired." So that, this tax being bad in principle—bad on all the principles relied on by hon. gentlemen opposite—surely it is wise not to increase that tax to such an extent as that it can never be taken off from the national revenue. Besides, it is obviously unjust to inflict this new burthen on land and real property until you have first taken off all the stamp duties that at present press unequally on the transfer of that description of property. For landowners are not, as a class, those great leviathans they have been represented. On the contrary, it has been proved in statistical evidence that the average income of all the landed proprietors of the kingdom amounts only to £150 a-year; and as this average includes all the great landholders, it follows that there must be a great many landowners whose incomes are much below that average. Therefore

a legacy duty on these small properties would necessitate sale or mortgage; and the abolition of the stamp duties must in common justice accompany the imposition of the legacy duty. So, then, you see that these operate against your substitute of the legacy duty, or level first the objections to all legacy duties whatsoever, and next the necessity of first abolishing all stamp duties on the transfer of that property in particular; while the house-tax is one which political economists approve in itself, and can be adopted as a single proposition on its own merits. But you object to the extension of the area. Yet no man can deny that the same principle which you apply to the income and property tax you must apply in a still more rigid manner to the tax on houses. The only exemptions you can allow are the classes who live on the wages of unskilled labour; the only limit should be that at which it becomes unsafe or impossible to collect the tax. But then we are told that the tax will interfere with the elective franchise. This, no doubt, is a grave consideration; but there is a consideration before the House which is still more grave, and it is this—the £10 householders now form a large portion of the electoral constituency, and it becomes a matter of great danger if a class which exercises so great an influence on all the taxation of this House, is itself altogether exempted from the taxation which it has the power of inflicting upon other classes. Now, if the House should resolve to sanction and enforce such a principle as this exemption by a deliberate vote, they will affirm the principle by which the old republics were first corrupted and then destroyed; they will sanction a principle, which justifies the people of France in preferring an absolute monarch to the workings of an unrestrained democracy; and that principle is the confiscation of property—confiscation for the benefit of numbers. And now, one word for the farmer. I wish hon. gentlemen opposite would dismiss altogether from their minds the spectre of compensation; for if compensation were sought for by the reduction of half the duties on malt, it would indeed be a miserable dole, altogether unworthy the House of Commons. But still the relief would be real, though I grant it would not be large; it would be a real

and practicable relief to agriculture, and that I will show if the House go into Committee on the subject. But it is not always the amount of relief given, but the mode and spirit in which it is offered, that allays dissatisfaction, and reconciles those who suffer from the crises which the changes in our national policy sometimes compel classes to undergo. We feel this when we have to deal with Ireland; one Government can often do very little more for that country than another; but it is the *animus* in which the offers of relief are made—the desire to do something—that makes all the difference between the Government which the Irish people are prepared to approve, and the Government which they are prepared to detest. So it is in England. All men are governed by their feelings as well as their interests. Men are not leather bags or strong boxes—but living beings, with hearts in their bosoms and blood in their veins—who can appreciate kind intentions as well as resent the systematic disdain of their complaints. I entreat you, then, not to treat the British farmers as if they were your enemies. You are not political economists only—you are politicians—you are English statesmen; and even supposing that the distress of the farmers is exaggerated—suppose that the farmers are the only persons in the world who never know whether their pockets are full or empty, still you cannot deny that they believe they are distressed—they assert that they have been injured, and that impression tends to produce disaffection; I put it to you whether it would not be wise and politic to remove the impression which alienates your countrymen from the laws. And what is this class? Why, that in which you have hitherto found, in times of danger and in case of war, that cheap defence of nations which consists in the ancient loyalty and the love of the native soil. It is seldom that the removal of disaffection can be purchased at too dear a rate; but now that you can do it so cheaply, and strengthen your country in the affections of its best defenders, how can you hesitate to accept the advantage? But the fact is, that behind all these questions there is to be found another which forcibly presses itself upon the consideration of the House. I should be the last person to impute to hon.

gentlemen a single factious or unworthy motive; but you have been so severe on the inconsistency of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, that you will allow me to ask you respectfully whether consistency of principle, independent of party, be precisely that virtue of which you set us an example—when, having first desired that we should recognise free trade as the guide of our future proceedings, no sooner is that concession made by the Government than the very gravamen of the charges against that Government is the concession it has made. Surely never before were men who were in earnest about a principle, so angry when they heard that their principle was not to be opposed. You have specially invited the Government, by the Resolution of my hon. friend the Member for Wolverhampton, to a farther extension of the principles of free trade; and now that measures in that direction have been prepared, accompanied by a direct tax so sound in its principle that there is not a single political economist whom you can cite against it, at once free trade is given up, political economy is thrown aside, and restriction on industry becomes the cry of the towns, in order to prevent free trade being carried out for the benefit of the country. It is so impossible to ascribe all this to unworthy or paltry motives, that I ascribe it rather to that honourable ambition which induces you to substitute a Government composed of the men you prefer, for a Government whose measures you are compelled to be inconsistent in order to disapprove. Now, one word with regard to myself, for it applies equally to gentlemen on this side of the House whose adherence to the cause of free trade you have somewhat ungraciously received. The opinions which I entertained upon the subject of a repeal of the corn laws gradually estranged me from a party to which I formerly rendered some trifling service—a party in which I still recognise not only private friends, but many accomplished politicians and statesmen—of consummate talents and experience. But it was not on that single question alone that I transferred my very humble support to the party and policy represented by the present Government. I did not make that transfer so long as the late Administration lasted. I did not do so till that

Administration—I hope I may say so without offence—died from its own exhaustion. Not until the noble Lord the late Premier, looking at the state of parties, could see no other person but Lord Derby to suggest to her Majesty as his successor—not till, regarding the position of affairs at home, still more the position of affairs abroad, I myself believed that it might be for the welfare and perhaps for the safety of the country, to give to Lord Derby's Government a fair and a cordial trial. It was first to that trial that I bounded my support; but I did so with full allowance for all the difficulties which the Government would have to encounter, and a firm belief that it would unite a conciliatory policy towards a class in which prolonged distress had produced a deep-seated sense of injustice, with that rational respect for public opinion which Lord Derby frankly expressed so soon as he acceded to office. In that school where I learnt the meaning of constitutional liberty, it was never considered a disgrace to a Minister of England to regulate, not indeed his private doctrines, but his political conduct, according to the opinions of his time. Nor did I ever think I should hear a taunt on the expediency of bowing to public opinion from the very men who have threatened to change the constitution itself in order to bring us still more under the influence of popular control. But that which has sanctioned and confirmed the support which I now tender to the Government is not any question connected with agriculture; it is not any party consideration; it is simply this—the disposition they have shown to promote general measures for the improvement of the laws, and for advancing the welfare of the people. I do not allude alone to reforms of the Court of Chancery, nor to the progamme of useful measures announced in her Majesty's gracious Speech, nor to the financial projects now before the House—of which I sincerely approve—but I must look also to the liberal and enlightened speech of the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other evening. I see there, for the first time, the pledge from a Minister of the Crown for economy and retrenchment, in the implied promise of large administrative reform. I see there a capacity to deal

with the most complicated of social questions—that connected with criminal punishment. I see a general understanding of what I conceive to be the great want of this time—for I believe the great body of the intelligent public is disposed to favour the policy of a Government which, while it will be conservative of the great principles of the constitution, will make that constitution suffice for all purposes of practical reform. It is by measures and sentiments like these that the Government have shown already that they do not come into office as the exclusive advocates of a single class, or the inert supporters of a retrograde policy. On the contrary, the more they can mitigate the sufferings of every class, whether commercial or agricultural, the more worthy they will be of the support of that House of Commons to which every section of the community that contributes to the supplies has a right to come for the redress of grievances; and if they can so contrive that no large portion of the community shall be left excluded from that prosperity which is paraded before our eyes, the more they will unite all classes and interests to co-operate with them in that calm but continuous progress in which it is the duty of every Ministry to maintain our hereditary place in the foremost rank of European civilisation. Therefore, for my part, I declare that the satisfaction with which I shall give my vote in accordance with the intrinsic merits of the question immediately before us, will be increased by thinking that it is one vote amongst many which may serve to continue this Government in its career of useful and liberal legislation; believing, as I do, that those same causes of dissension which before rendered a Ministry formed from the opposite benches so weak and ineffective, in spite of the honesty, the virtues, and the genius of the men who composed, and the Premier who presided over it, do still exist, and will still prevent that unity and firmness of purpose which can alone render effectual the desire to preserve—perhaps against attacks from its own supporters—that balance between safe reform and hazardous experiment on which I believe, in my conscience, depend the continuance of our prosperity and the stability of the Empire.

XI.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 25TH OF APRIL 1853.

ON Monday, the 25th of April 1853, upon the House of Commons going into Committee of Ways and Means on the Income Tax resolutions of the Budget, the member for Hertfordshire, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, moved by way of amendment—

"To leave out the words 'towards raising the supply granted to her Majesty there shall be raised annually during the terms hereinafter limited the several Rates and Duties following,' in order to insert the words: 'the continuance of the Income Tax for seven years, and its extension to classes heretofore exempt from its operation, without any mitigation of the inequalities of its assessment, are alike unjust and impolitic,' instead thereof."

A discussion thereupon arose which lasted four nights, the amendment being rejected at the close of the last sitting, on Monday the 3d of May, by 323 votes to 252. In submitting the amendment to the consideration of the House in Committee the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—I will endeavour to condense, as closely as possible, the arguments I propose to use to enforce my amendment. The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has informed the House he regards the income tax as the keystone of his financial scheme; and the right hon. gentleman has requested the House not so much to give attention to the keystone as to bestow their admiration on the various superstructures it is in-

tended to bear. But I think it is necessary that the House should first examine the keystone, to find out whether it is quite perfect or whether it needs repairs; by doing this it will be able to look with more satisfaction at the superstructure. I will admit that there is much in the Budget worthy the high reputation of the right hon. gentleman, and of the approval of the country. And I will grant, also, that the income tax may fairly be retained for a certain period, in order to enable the right hon. gentleman to develop his financial scheme. But if the tax is necessary, it is not necessary to renew also all its defects; there is no reason that the country should not possess all the good things in the right hon. gentleman's budget, in combination with that reform in the income tax which is demanded by justice and the sense of the country. There is this marked difference between the right hon. gentleman and those who have supported Lord Derby's Government, namely—that when the late Government proposed to deal with the income tax, they made it an indispensable condition to remove from that impost the elements of unpopularity, and to establish a clear distinction between precarious income and income derived from realised property. The right hon. gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer refuses to make that distinction. He proposes to leave the principal objections untouched. Now it is precisely because I concur in the two fundamental premises of the right hon. gentleman that I am compelled to come to a different conclusion. I agree with the right hon. gentleman, first, that the income tax is a mighty financial resource, which should be kept available in all times for future need; and, secondly, that it ought not to be regarded as an habitual feature of our taxation. But exactly because I wish to have this tax available, with the ready assent of the people, in any future need, that I ask the House to remove from it those features which now make it so unpopular; or, if it be held unwise to correct the machinery of the tax, we should at least endeavour to console those who are ground down by this tax, by showing them we will not maintain it a single year longer than we can help. The right hon. gentleman, however, determines to do exactly the reverse, for he retains all the inequalities of the

impost, and postpones its suspension to the furthest possible period. Seven years may be a short period in the history of a people, but it is a long period in the lives of a generation; and at the end of seven years what guarantee is there that the tax will be abolished? The right hon. gentleman candidly says he does not wonder at the incredulity of the people on the subject of the repeal of the income tax, when he recollects the promises of his predecessors; but, says the right hon. gentleman, "I will state the calculations and resources on which I rely for the extinction of the tax, and then leave the public to judge for themselves." The right hon. gentleman, accordingly, luminously sums up the amount of his financial expectations, if not to our satisfaction at least to his own, and shows that in 1860 there will be a balance arising from his scheme, which will enable parliament to dispense with the £6,000,000 contributed by the income tax to the revenue. But the right hon. gentleman does not take into the account the *per contra*, that all this time Members on both sides of the House will be doing their best to forestall his balance-sheet. If hon. members, even on the right hon. gentleman's side of the House, refused to wait four days before they embarrassed his whole Budget by the repeal of the advertisement duty, how can the right hon. gentleman possibly suppose that his opponents or the independent members will wait seven years without interfering with that balance with which he proposes to pay off the income tax by propounding reductions of their own? Every class has some particular interest against some particular tax, stronger than its share in the general interest against the income tax; and the right hon. gentleman may rest assured that these particular interests will not wait to make themselves heard till the precise period which the right hon. gentleman has marked for the full development of his plans. And just in proportion as the revenue is most flourishing—just as the terminable annuities are falling in—the advocates for the repeal of the paper duties, for the abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers, for the repeal of the malt tax, and so on, will the more eagerly press forward their claims, deaf to any pathetic appeal not to derange the balance that is to pay off the income tax. So that when the

time comes to slay the giant, the giant will have grown bigger and stronger than ever—be cased in the same impenetrable brass—and not a pebble will be left in the brook that will fit into the sling reserved to kill the Goliah. But supposing all these fears to be vain, and supposing no taxes be taken off, still the right hon. gentleman is compelled to base all his calculations on the bold assumption that the remissions of taxes will have replaced themselves by 1860—that, from analogous experience, he has a right to assume that after the reductions the amounts received from the various articles in 1860 will be nearly the same as now. The public income, the right hon. gentleman tells us, by the remissions he proposes, will be diminished to the extent of not less than £5,384,000; but then, says he, by the commercial law of reproduction, the amount of loss to the taxes will have replaced itself by 1860, and at that time he will have an available surplus of £5,959,000, which will enable the House to do away with the income tax should it think fit. The right hon. gentleman's scheme all depends on that assumption. Now, I grant that a reduction of duties on articles largely consumed does ultimately replace itself by increased consumption; but the House must recollect that that rule applies to duties reduced, and has obviously no application to articles the duties on which are absolutely repealed. And yet the right hon. gentleman proposes to abolish altogether the duties on soap—in amount £1,120,000, and on certain other articles of Customs, amounting to £53,000; making a total of £1,179,000 of taxes absolutely abolished, and which, therefore, as a matter of course, will not be subject to the commercial law of reproduction. How can the duty be replaced when it is altogether abolished? Looking further, I find other items which the right hon. gentleman expects will be restored to the revenue in six years. I find colonial postage £400,000; but this is an absolute expenditure, not a duty to be reproduced. Then the law of reproduction is not applicable to articles of luxury—such as carriages, horses, &c. The duty on these articles is to be sacrificed to the extent of £340,000. Then, with respect to spirits, what becomes of the law of reproduction there? It is calculated that the duty will not be diminished but increased

by £436,000, in consequence of the proposed change; but who can say that the increase, whatever it may be, will not be supplied by illicit distillation, and that the augmented receipts will not go into the pocket of the illicit distiller, instead of enriching the Exchequer? Together, these items amount to two millions —of which one portion is not subject to the commercial law of reproduction, and the larger portion is made up of duties abolished altogether; yet the right hon. gentleman relies on these items to produce him one-third of that surplus which, in 1860, is to get rid of the income tax. I may be told that, though individual reductions should not replace their loss to the revenue individually, yet that their effect in stimulating the general energy, and in consequently promoting the general prosperity, will operate equivalently. But there will be another operation going on at the same time; the greater the general prosperity, why, the greater the amount paid in the shape of income tax, and the greater, therefore, the unwillingness of any Chancellor of the Exchequer to part with so productive an impost when the time comes. Thus there is this double risk for the country—first, that, in prosperity, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not part with the income tax, because it is so rich and ready a resource; and, secondly, that in adversity it will become a matter of necessity to retain it. I object, then, to the continuance of the income tax for the period of seven years, without any guarantee that it will be abolished at the end of that time; and if I had any doubt on that point, and if I wished for proof that the right hon. gentleman himself doubts the realisation of his hopes, I should find a confirmation of those doubts in a letter which has appeared in one of the journals of this morning. The letter is written by the right hon. gentleman in reply to a question from a clerk at Birmingham, asking him how he is to be benefited by the income tax? The right hon. gentleman, in one part of his letter, informs the sceptical clerk—"The tax collector, should Parliament adopt the Government proposition, will, about January, call upon you for the half-yearly payment of £1, 0s. 10d," pleasantly adding that the visit "will be repeated in July, and this for seven years—when, unless Parliament, in consideration

of other public benefits or necessities not yet foreseen, should prolong the tax, it will drop altogether." Upon such a qualified assurance as this, I think the House will hardly consent to continue this tax for seven years—to continue it, moreover, with all those characteristics of unfairness and inequality which so tend to demoralise the public. The right hon. gentleman has admitted, with his wonted frankness, that the fraud and falsehood engendered by the operation of the impost in men engaged in trade and business who make out their own returns, constitutes one reason, and a main reason, against the tax. But why, I would ask, are this fraud and falsehood found in classes before proverbial for their straightforward integrity? Why, but because those who have to pay it see in it so much inequality and injustice as to reconcile their consciences to every method which can evade the intention of the law. It is a property in human nature, that evasion of the law becomes general the moment the operation of the law becomes over-harsh or unjust. Thus, when death is the punishment of offences not grave enough for that extreme penalty, jurymen have belied their consciences, and acquitted the offender. Thus the old severity of the game laws has enlisted sympathy on the side of the poacher; the same principle has bonded together the whole peasant population of Ireland against laws which they feel to be partial, and that same principle now will gradually rot away the honesty of the British tradesman. But I contend that all the objections to the income tax, as it now stands, applies with increased force to its proposed extension. The late Government proposed to extend the tax to incomes of £100 a-year, but they determined the tax should be placed on that equitable footing required by the great body of the public. The present Government proposes to extend it to the same incomes, whether justly or unjustly assessed; they propose to extend it to that class whose humble subsistence is drawn from their daily labour; they propose to extend to men whose humble circumstances must more tempt them to evade it, that same law, perfectly unmitigated, which has already corrupted the morality of men much better off; they propose to give injustice a wider circulation, to create a wider hatred than that which

already prevails—to sink deeper still into the heart of the nation, not only a hatred of the tax, but the demoralising effects which it produces. The Government says, "We will extend the tax to Ireland." I will not argue whether Government are doing right in inflicting another burden on that country at the very period when a revolution in all the tenure of real property is yet going on; but I think no greater insult could be offered to the common sense of that country than to propose to do away with a partial debt as a compensation for the obligations of a general tax. One could be no compensation for the other. What consolation, for instance, would the landlords of Clare feel on being told by Government, "You are wiping out a debt incurred by a parish in Limerick!" So that instead of making the extension of the tax a matter of fairness and justice, it is only an extension of iniquity. It is for the plain reason that in great measures of taxation it is necessary to go with the great intelligence of the people, that I shall not follow the right hon. gentleman through all those ingenious arguments and references to special instances and examples by which he has vindicated the present adherence to the income tax; because, even if I grant that the right hon. gentleman has made out his case to the satisfaction of highly-educated logicians, still I fear that the stubborn prejudice of less scholastic persons will rebel against his reasoning, and that the tradesman, after puzzling his head with all the ingenious definitions and distinctions of the right hon. gentleman, will still blunder back to his old position, and will say, "That may be all very fine, but I can't for the life of me conceive that it is just that that income which a man enjoys for his life upon secured capital, and may give to his heirs, shall pay the same as mine, which I may lose by a casualty or by a stroke of paralysis to-morrow, leaving my children to the care of the parish." The right hon. gentleman must remember that it has been said by the highest authority—that it is never enough to prove that a tax is just in the abstract, but that it is much more important for the safety of the commonwealth to convince those who pay it that there is justice in its application. I do not allow, however, that the right hon. gentleman can make out his case to the satisfaction of logicians, and

I deny altogether the accuracy of the deductions which he has drawn from the special instances he has cited to show what may be called "the latent impartiality" of the burden. If you deduct legal expenses, management charges, and repairs from real property, it actually, says the right hon. gentleman, pays 9d. in the pound, while the tradesman pays but 7d. If you look, however, with equal liberality to the reductions which should be made to traders, in the shape of bad debts and matters of that description, I apprehend that that difference will vanish altogether. But is there no other property besides that in houses and land with which the tradesman comes in comparison? There is no reduction for repairs upon the property of the fundholder, for example: he receives his income net and clear, yet he is taxed at the same rate only as the man who has no capital save his industry, and no security save his health. That the right hon. gentleman is aware there is injustice in this is perfectly clear, because, after having told us that land is the most severely taxed of all, he nevertheless proceeds to say that he shares in the feelings of those who consider that the tax presses too hard upon intelligence and skill, and not hard enough upon property; and he then sets to work to repair that injustice by laying the additional burden upon the owners of real property of a new tax amounting to no less than £2,000,000 a-year. But the right hon. gentleman says, "See what difficulties you involve yourselves in if you attempt to classify incomes; the incomes from some trades are better than those derived from land, and in trades themselves some are worth only three or four years' purchase, while others are worth twenty-five years' purchase." Of course, those disparities will exist, and it was very hard to deal with them strictly; but the same disparities exist in all phases of life, and these small petty matters of detail must be discarded, and broad distinctions only must be recognised. The same thing must exist, for instance, in the case of assurance on lives; but if actuaries are possessed of the same finely-discriminating genius as the right hon. gentleman, I believe that the scruples which will be engendered will prevent any assurances being effected at all. Fancy a grandfather and a grandson presenting themselves at the

same office! According to general tables, the grandfather's life may be worth five years' purchase, the grandson's twenty-five; but suppose the actuary to be of the ingenious and discriminating turn of mind of the right hon. gentleman, he may say—"Oh, but youth runs more dangers than age—the young man may hunt, and may fall from his horse, or he may shoot, and be killed in a *battue;* I really don't know that the young gentleman's life may not be worse than his grandfather's." And so it may be in some individual cases; still, if it were not pretty clearly established that grandchildren lived longer than grandfathers, assurance societies would have been ruined long ago. By the same argument some incomes derived from trade may be more valuable than incomes from real property; but you must lay down a broad principle in dealing with these questions, and that is the one broad general principle, that income that is derived from secured capital is, on the whole, incontestably more valuable than income that depends upon the accident of health. I promised to be brief, and I have been so. I believe I have touched upon all the main points of the question, and I am willing to leave to others the filling up of the details. I have endeavoured to show that, if the tax is continued as a temporary tax, it is continued far too long—until there will be instilled into the hearts of our countrymen both a hatred, derived from a sense of injustice, and the demoralisation that belongs to a war between conscience and law. But if it is intended to be permanent, or rather easily susceptible of revival, then the first step ought to be to remove that which most tends to induce opposition, and allure to fraud. I have endeavoured to show that the tax is unjust in itself, and that these extensions are not politic, when with the tax you extend also that injustice which those who have paid it have hitherto complained of. I have endeavoured also to show that the right hon. gentleman has given us no guarantee that the income tax should cease in 1860, and that the surplus on which he relies is exposed to great hazards; and, lastly, that the arguments of the right hon. gentleman, founded upon special instances and examples, are not of a nature to satisfy or console those who pay the burden. The right hon.

gentleman will believe me that I should be the last man to depreciate his high powers and attainments. On the contrary, I hope, if defeated in this measure, that the right hon. gentleman will do as others have done before him—will correct his measure, but retain his position. It has sometimes been represented that the country gentlemen are indifferent to all taxes that do not oppress themselves. I rejoice that, upon this occasion at least, we can triumphantly rebut that charge. It may be true that some have thought it their duty—and I believe correctly thought—to vindicate the claims of British industry upon the part of the farmer. It is something of the same principle that we should defend now in the case of the British tradesman, because we believe that the rights of industry are invaded whenever Government taxes at the same rate the precarious earnings of labour and our own hereditary possessions. There has been, I believe, some vague intimation of a dissolution, in case this measure shall be lost. I and those with whom I act are quite ready to encounter such a calamity. I cannot pretend to judge how many gentlemen, the representatives of towns, may be disposed to vote against this resolution. I cannot doubt their honest motives if they do; but if they do, and if the threatened dissolution occurs, let them go back to their town constituencies, canvass them on behalf of the income tax, and tell those whose sole fortune is their toil and skill how they have been opposed by those selfish aristocrats, the country gentlemen of England, and the supporters of Lord Derby's Administration.

XII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE QUEEN STREET HALL, EDINBURGH,

ON THE 18TH OF JANUARY 1854.

ON Wednesday, the 18th of January 1854, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was installed in the Queen Street Hall, Edinburgh, as the Honorary President of the Associated Societies of the University in that city. Immediately after the ceremony had been performed the following address was delivered.

GENTLEMEN,—I may well feel overcome by the kindness with which you receive me, for I cannot disentangle my earliest recollections from my sense of intellectual obligations to the genius of Scotland. The first poets who charmed me from play in the half-holidays of school were Campbell and Scott—the first historians who clothed, for me, with life, the shadows of the past, were Robertson and Hume—the first philosopher who, by the grace of his attractive style, lured me on to the analysis of the human mind, was Dugald Stewart—and the first novel that I bought with my own money, and hid under my pillow, was the Roderick Random of Smollett. So, when later, in a long vacation from my studies at Cambridge I learned the love for active adventure, and contracted the habit of self-reliance by solitary excursions on foot, my staff

in my hand and my knapsack on my shoulders, it was towards Scotland that I instinctively bent my way, as if to the nursery-ground from which had been wafted to my mind the first germs of those fertile and fair ideas which, after they have come to flower upon their native soil, return to seed, and are carried by the winds we know not whither, calling up endless diversities of the same plant, according to the climate and the ground to which they are borne by chance.

Gentlemen, this day I visited, with Professor Aytoun, the spot on which, a mere lad, obscure and alone, I remember to have stood one starlight night, in the streets of Edinburgh, gazing across what was then a deep ravine, upon the picturesque outlines of the Old Town, all the associations which make Scotland so dear to romance, and so sacred to learning, rushing over me in tumultuous pleasure; her stormy history, her enchanting legends—wild tales of witchcraft and fairyland—of headlong chivalry and tragic love—all contrasting, yet all uniting, with the renown of schools famous for patient erudition and tranquil science,—I remember how I then wished that I could have found some tie in parentage or blood to connect me with the great people in whose capital I stood a stranger. That tie which birth denied to me, my humble labours and your generous kindness have at last bestowed; and the stranger in your streets stands to-day in this crowded hall, proud to identify his own career with the hopes and aspirations of the youth of Scotland.

Gentlemen, when I turn to what the analogous custom of other universities renders my duty upon this occasion, and offer some suggestions that may serve as hints in your various studies, I feel literally overshadowed by the awe of the great names, all your own, which rise high around me in every department of human progress. It is not only the illustrious dead before whom I have to bow—your wonted fires do not live only in their ashes. The men of to-day are worthy the men of yesterday. A thousand rays of intellectual light are gathered and fused together in the varied learning of your distinguished Principal. The chivalry of your glorious annals

finds its new Tyrtæus in the vigorous and rushing verse of Professor Aytoun. Your medical schools, in all their branches—pathology, medical jurisprudence, surgery, anatomy, chemistry—advance more and more to fresh honours under the presiding names of Simpson, Alison, Christison, Goodsir, Traill, Syme, and Gregory. The general cause of education itself is identified with the wide repute of Professor Pillans. Nature has added the name of Forbes to the list of those who have not only examined her laws but discovered her secrets; while the comprehensive science of Sir William Hamilton still corrects and extends the sublime chart that defines the immaterial universe of ideas. And how can I forget the name of one man, whose character and works must have produced the most healthful influence over the youth of Scotland—combining, as they do, in the rarest union, all that is tender and graceful with all that is hardy and masculine—the exquisite poet, the vigorous critic, the eloquent discourser, the joyous comrade—the minstrel of the Isle of Palms—the Christopher North of Maga? How I wish that the plaudits with which you receive this inadequate reference to one so loved and honoured might be carried to his ears, and assure him that—like those statues of the great Roman fathers in the well-known passage of Tacitus—if he be absent from the procession he is still more remembered by the assembly! And since I see around me many who, though not connected with your college, are yet interested in the learned fame of your capital, permit me on this neutral ground to suspend all differences of party, and do homage to the great orator and author, whose luminous genius, whose scholastic attainments, whose independence of spirit, whose integrity of life, so worthily represent not only the capital, but the character of the people who claim their countryman by descent in Macaulay. When I think of those names, and of many more which I might cite, if time would allow me to make the catalogue of your living title-deeds to fame, I might well shrink from the task before me; but as every man assists to a general illumination by placing a single light at his own window, so, perhaps, my individual experience

may contribute its humble ray to the atmosphere which genius and learning have kindled into familiar splendour.

Gentlemen, I shall first offer some remarks upon those fundamental requisites which, no matter what be our peculiar studies, are essential to excellence in all of them. Nature indicates to the infant the two main elements of wisdom—nature herself teaches the infant to observe and to inquire. You will have noticed how every new object catches the eye of a young child—how intuitively he begins to question you upon all that he surveys—what it is? what it is for? how it came there? how it is made? who made it? Gradually, as he becomes older, his observation is less vigilant, his curiosity less eager. In fact, both faculties are often troublesome and puzzling to those about him. He is told to attend to his lessons, and not ask questions to which he cannot yet understand the replies. Thus his restless vivacity is drilled into mechanical forms, so that often when we leave school we observe less and inquire less than when we stood at the knees of our mother in the nursery. But our first object on entering upon youth, and surveying the great world that spreads before us, should be to regain the earliest attributes of the child. What were the instincts of the infant are the primary duties of the student. His ideas become rich and various in proportion as he observes—accurate and practical in proportion as he inquires. The old story of Newton observing the fall of the apple, and so arriving by inquiry at the laws of gravity, will occur to you all. But this is the ordinary process in every department of intelligence. A man observes more attentively than others had done something in itself very simple. He reflects, tests his observation by inquiry, and becomes the discoverer, the inventor; enriches a science, improves a manufacture, adds a new beauty to the arts, or, if engaged in professional active life, detects, as a physician, the secret cause of disease—extracts truth, as a lawyer, from contradictory evidence—or grapples, as a statesman, with the complicated principles by which nations flourish or decay. In short, take with you into all your studies this leading proposition, that, whether in active

life or in letters and research, a man will always be eminent according to the vigilance with which he observes, and the acuteness with which he inquires. But this is not enough—something more is wanted—it is that resolute effort of the will which we call perseverance. I am no believer in genius without labour; but I do believe that labour, judiciously and continuously applied, becomes genius in itself. Success in removing obstacles, as in conquering armies, depends on this law of mechanics—the greatest amount of force at your command concentrated on a given point. If your constitutional force be less than another man's, you equal him if you continue it longer and concentrate it more. The old saying of the Spartan parent to the son who complained that his sword was too short, is applicable to everything in life—"If your weapon is too short, add a step to it." Dr Arnold, the famous Rugby schoolmaster, said, the difference between one boy and another was not so much in talent as in energy. It is with boys as with men; and perseverance is energy made habitual. But I forget that I am talking to Scotchmen; no need to preach energy and perseverance to them. Those are their national characteristics. Is there a soil upon earth from which the Scotchman cannot wring some harvest for fortune; or one field of honourable contest on which he has not left some trophy of renown?

We must now talk a little upon books. Gentlemen, the objects and utilities of reading are so various, that to suggest any formal rules whereby to dictate its subjects and confine its scope, would be to resemble the man in a Greek anecdote, who, in order to improve his honey, cut off the wings of his bees, and placed before them the flowers his own sense found the sweetest. No doubt, the flowers were the best he could find on Hymettus; but, somehow or other, when the bees had lost their wings, they made no honey at all. Still, while the ordinary inducement to reading is towards general delight and general instruction, it is well in youth to acquire the habit of reading with conscientious toil for a special purpose. Whatever costs us labour, braces all the sinews of the mind in the effort; and whatever we study with a definite object, fixes a much

more tenacious hold on the memory than do the lessons of mere desultory reading. If, for instance, you read the history of the latter half of the last century, simply because some works on the subject are thrown in your way; unless your memory be unusually good, you will retain but a vague recollection, that rather serves to diminish ignorance than bestow knowledge. But suppose, in a debating society, that the subject of debate be the character of Charles Fox, or the Administration of Mr Pitt, and some young man gets up the facts of the time for the special purpose of making an ample and elaborate speech on the principles and career of either of those statesmen, the definite purpose for which he reads, and the animated object to which it is to be applied, will, in all probability, fix what he reads indelibly on his mind; and to the dry materials of knowledge will be added the *vivida vis* of argument and reasoning. You see now, then, how wisely the first founders of learning established institutions for youth on the collegiate principle; fixing the vague desire for knowledge into distinct bounds, by lectures on chosen subjects, and placing before the ambition of the student the practical object of honourable distinction—a distinction, indeed, that connects itself with our gentlest affections, and our most lasting interests: for honours gained in youth pay back to our parents, while they are yet living, some part of what we owe to their anxiety and care. And whatever renown a University can confer, abridges the road to subsequent success, interests our contemporaries in our career, and raises up a crowd eager to cheer on our first maturer efforts to make a name. The friendships we form at college die away as life divides us, but the honours we gain there remain and constitute a portion of ourselves. Who, for instance, can separate the fame of a Brougham or a Mackintosh from the reputation they established at the University of Edinburgh? The variety of knowledge embraced in the four divisions, which are here called Faculties, allows to every one an ample choice, according to the bias of each several mind, or the profession for which the student is destined. But there is one twofold branch of humane letters in which the

Universities of Scotland are so renowned that I must refer to it specially, though the reference must be brief—I mean moral and metaphysical philosophy, which, in Edinburgh especially, has been allied to the Graces by the silver style of Dugald Stewart, and taken the loveliness which Plato ascribes to virtue from the beautiful intellect of Brown. Now, it would be idle to ask the general student to make himself a profound metaphysician. You might as well ask him to make himself a great poet. Both the one and the other are born for their calling; not made by our advice, but their own irresistible impulse. But a liberal view of the principal theories as to the formation of the human mind, and the latent motives of human conduct, is of essential service to all about to enter upon busy practical life. Such studies quicken our perceptions of error and virtue, enlarge our general knowledge of mankind, and enable our later experience to apply with order and method the facts it accumulates. I need not remind those who boast the great name of Chalmers, or who heard the lectures of your Principal two years ago, that Moral Philosophy is the handmaid of Divinity, She is also the sister of Jurisprudence, and the presiding genius of that art in which you are so famous; and which, in order to heal the body, must often prescribe alteratives to the mind—more especially in these days, when half our diseases come from the neglect of the body in the overwork of the brain. In this railway age the wear and tear of labour and intellect go on without pause or self-pity. We live longer than our forefathers, but we suffer more from a thousand artificial anxieties and cares. They fatigued only the muscles; we exhaust the finer strength of the nerves; and when we send impatiently to the doctor, it is ten to one but what he finds the acute complaint, which is all that we perceive, connected with some chronic mental irritation, or some unwholesome inveteracy of habit. Here, then, the physician, accustomed to consider how mind acts upon body, will exercise with discretion the skill that moral philosophy has taught him. Every one knows the difference between two medical attendants, perhaps equally learned in pharmacy and the routine of the schools; the one writes in

haste the prescription we may as well "throw to the dogs;" the other, by his soothing admonitions, his agreeable converse, cheers up the gloomy spirits, regulates the defective habits, and often, unconsciously to ourselves, "ministers to the mind diseased, and plucks from the memory a rooted sorrow." And the difference between them is, that one has studied our moral anatomy, and the other has only looked on us as mere machines of matter, to be inspected by a peep at the tongue, and regulated by a touch of the pulse. And in order to prove my sense of the connection between moral and metaphysical philosophy and practical pathology, and to pay a joint compliment to the two sciences for which your college is so pre-eminent, I here, as a personal favour to myself, crave permission of the heads and authorities of the University to offer the prize of a gold medal, for the current year, for the best essay by any student on some special subject implying the connection I speak of, which may be selected in concert with the various Professors of your medical schools and the Professors of Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy.

Gentlemen, allow me to preface the topic to which I now turn by congratulating you on the acquisition your scholarship has recently made in the accomplished translator of Æschylus, Professor Blackie—who appears to have thrown so much light on the ancient language of the Greeks by showing its substantial identity with the modern. I now proceed to impress on you the importance of Classical studies. I shall endeavour to avoid the set phrases of declamatory panegyric which the subject too commonly provokes. But if those studies appear to you cold and tedious, the fault is in the languor with which they are approached. Do you think that the statue of ancient art is but a lifeless marble? Animate it with your own young breath, and instantly it lives and glows. Greek literature, if it served you with nothing else, should excite your curiosity as the picture of a wondrous state of civilisation which, in its peculiar phases, the world can never see again, and yet from which every succeeding state of civilisation has borrowed its liveliest touches. If you take it first as a mere record of events,

—if you examine only the contest between the Spartans and the Athenians—the one as the representative of duration and order, the other of change and progress, both pushed to the extreme,—there instantly rise before you, in the noblest forms—through the grandest illustrations of history—through the collision of characters at once human and heroic—there instantly, I say, rise before you lessons which may instruct every age, and which may especially guide the present. For so closely does Grecian history bear on the more prominent disputes in our own day, that it is not only full of wise saws, but still more of modern instances. I pass by this view of the political value of Grecian literature, on which I could not well enlarge without, perhaps, provoking party differences, to offer some remarks, purely critical, and for which I bespeak your indulgence if I draw too largely on your time. Every Professor who encourages the young to the study of the Classics will tell them how those ancient masterpieces have served modern Europe with models to guide the taste and excite the emulation. But here let us distinguish what we should mean when we speak of them as models—we mean no check to originality—no cold and sterile imitation, more especially of form and diction. The pith and substance of a good English style—be it simple and severe, be it copious and adorned—must still be found in the nervous strength of our native tongue. We need not borrow from Greek or Roman the art that renders a noble thought transparent to the humblest understanding, or charms the fastidious ear with the varying music of elaborate cadence. The classic authors are models in a more comprehensive sense. They teach us less how to handle words than how to view things;—and first, let us recognise the main characteristic of the literature of Greece. The genius of Greek letters is essentially social and humane. Far from presenting us with a frigid and austere ideal, it deals with the most vivid passions, the largest interests common to the mass of mankind. In this sense of the word it is practical—that is, it connects itself with the natural feelings, the practical life of man under all forms of civilisation. That is the reason why it is so durable—it fastens hold of sympathy and interest

in every nation and every age. Thus Homer is immeasurably the most popular poet the world ever knew. The Iliad is constructed from materials with which the natural human heart has the most affinity. Our social instincts interest us on both sides, whether in the war of the Greeks avenging the desecration of the marriage hearth, or the doom of the Trojans, which takes all its pathos from the moment we see Hector parting from Andromache, and unbinding his helmet that it may not terrify his child. Homer makes no attempt at abstract subtle feelings with which few can sympathise. He takes terror and pity from the most popular springs of emotion—valour, love, patriotism, domestic affections—the struggle of Man with fate—the contrast, as in Achilles, between glorious youth and early death—between headlong daring and passionate sorrow; the contrast, as in Priam, between all that gives reverence to the king and all that moves compassion for the man. Homer knows no conventional dignity; his heroes weep—his goddesses scold—Mars roars with pain when he is wounded—Hector himself knows fear, and we do not respect him the less, though we love him more, when his heart sinks and his feet fly before Achilles. So essentially human is Homer, that it is said that he first created the Greek gods—that is, he clothed what before were vague phantoms with attributes familiar to humanity, and gave them the power of divinities, with the forms and the hearts of men.

Civilisation advances, but the Greek literature still preserves this special character of humanity, and each succeeding writer still incorporates his genius with the actual existence and warm emotions of the crowd. Æschylus strides forth from the field of Marathon, to give voice to the grand practical ideas that influenced his land and times. He represents the apotheosis of freedom, and the dawn of philosophy through the mists of fable. Thus, in the victory hymn of "the Persæ" he chants the defeat of Xerxes; thus, in the "Seven before Thebes," he addresses an audience still hot from the memories of war, in words that rekindle its passions and re-echo its clang; thus, again, in the wondrous myth of the "Prometheus Bound," he piles up the

fragments of primeval legend with a Titan's hand, storming the very throne of Zeus with assertions of the liberty of intellectual will, as opposed to the authority of force. In Æschylus there is always the very form and pressure of an age characterised by fierce emotions, and the tumult of new ideas struggling for definite expression. Sophocles no less commands an everlasting audience by genial sympathy with the minds and thought, and the hearts that beat, in his own day. The stormy revolution of thought that succeeded the Persian war had given way to a milder, but not less manly, period of serene intelligence. The time had come in which what we call "The Beautiful" developed its ripe proportions. A sentiment of order, of submission to the gods—a desire to embellish the social existence secured by victorious war—pervaded the manners, and inspired the gentle emulation. All this is reflected in the calm splendour of Sophocles. It seems a type of the difference between the two that Æschylus, a bearded man, had fought at Marathon—and Sophocles, in the bloom of youth, had tuned his harp to the pæans that circled round the trophies of Salamis. The Prometheus of Æschylus is a vindication of human wisdom, made with the sublime arrogance of a Titan's pride. The Œdipus of Sophocles teaches its nothingness to Wisdom, and inflicts its blind punishment upon Pride. But observe how both these great poets inculcate the sentiment of Mercy as an element of tragic grandeur, and how they both seek to connect that attribute of humanity with the fame of their native land. Thus it is to Athens that the Orestes of Æschylus comes to expiate his parricide—it is the tutelary goddess of the Athenians that pleads in his cause, and reconciles the Furies to the release of their hunted victim. But still more impressively does Sophocles inculcate and adorn this lesson of beautiful humanity. It is not only amidst the very grove of the Furies that Œdipus finds the peaceful goal of his wanderings—but round that grove itself the poet has lavished all the loveliest images of his fancy. There, in the awful ground of the ghastly sisters, the Nightingales sing under the ivy—there blooms the Narcissus—there smiles the olive—there spring the fountains that feed Cephisus.

Thus terror itself he surrounds with beauty, and the nameless grave of the outlawed Œdipus becomes the guardian of the benignant state, which gave the last refuge to his woes.

A few years more, and a new phase of civilisation develops itself in Athens. To that sentiment for the beautiful which in itself discovers the good, succeeds the desire to moralise and speculate. The influence of women on social life is more admitted—statesmen and sages gather round Aspasia—love occupies a larger space in the thoughts of men—and pity is derived from gentler, perhaps from more effeminate, sources. This change Euripides—no less practical than his predecessors in representing the popular temper of his age—this change, I say, Euripides comes to depict in sententious aphorisms, in scholastic casuistry, accompanied, however, with the tenderest pathos, and enlisting that interest for which he is ridiculed by Aristophanes,—the interest derived from conjugal relations and household life—the domestic interest; it is this which has made him of all the Greek dramatists the most directly influential in the modern stage. And it is Euripides who has suggested to the classic tragedy of Italy and France two-thirds of whatever it possesses of genuine tenderness and passion. In a word, the Greek drama is not that marble perfection of artistic symmetry which it has too often been represented to be, but a flesh and blood creation, identifying itself with the emotions most prevalent in the multitudes it addressed, and artificial rather by conventions derived from its religious origin than by any very deep study of other principles of art than those which sympathy with human nature teaches instinctively to the poet. The rules prescribed to the Greek dramatist, such as the unities, were indeed few and elementary, belonging rather to the commencement of art than to its full development. There are few critics nowadays, for instance, who will not recognise a higher degree of art in Shakespeare, when he transports his willing audience over space and time, and concentrates in Macbeth the whole career of guilty ambition, from its first dire temptation to its troubled rise and its bloody doom, than there can be in any formal rule which would have sacrificed for dry recital the

vivacity of action, and crowded into a day what Shakespeare expands throughout a life.

In fine, then, these Greek poets became our models—not as authorities for pedantic laws, not to chill our invention by unsubstantial ideals or attempts to restore to life the mere mummies of antiquity—but rather, on the contrary, to instruct us that the writer who most faithfully represents the highest and fairest attributes of his own age has the best chance of an audience in posterity; and that whatever care we take as to the grace or sublimity of diction, still the diction itself can only be the instrument by which the true poet would refine or exalt what?—why, the feelings most common to the greatest number of mankind. We have heard too much about the calm and repose of classic art. It is the distance from which we take our survey that does not allow us to distinguish its force and its passion. Thus the rivulet, when near, seems more disturbed than the ocean beheld afar off. At the distance of two thousand years, if we do not see all the play of the waves, it is because we do not stand on the beach. The same practical identification with the intellectual attributes of their age which distinguished the poetry, no less animates the prose, of the ancient Greeks. The narratives of Herodotus, so simple yet so glowing, were read to immense multitudes—now exciting their wonder by tale and legend—now gratifying their curiosity by accounts of barbarian customs—now inflaming their patriotism by minute details of the Persian myriads that exhausted rivers on their march, and graphic anecdotes of the Grecian men whom the Medes at Marathon saw rushing into the midst of their spears, or whom the scout of Xerxes found dressing their hair for the festival of battle in the glorious pass of Thermopylæ. No less does the graver mind of Thucydides represent the intense interest with which the Grecian intellect was accustomed to view the action and strife, the sorrow and triumph, of the human beings, from whom it never stood superciliously aloof. Though the father of philosophical history, Thucydides knows nothing of that cynical irony which is common to the modern spirit of historical philosophy in its cold survey of the follies

and errors of mankind. He never neglects to place full before you whatever ennobles our species, whether it be the lofty sentiment of Pericles or the hardy valour of Brasidas. It is his candid sympathy with whatever in itself is good and great which vivifies his sombre chronicle, and renders him at once earnest yet impartial. Each little bay or creek, each defile or pass, where gallant deeds have been done, he describes with the conviction that the deeds have hallowed the place to all posterity, and have become a part of that κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί which he proposed to bequeath. This is the spirit which returns to life in your own day and in your own historians, which gives a classic charm to the military details of Napier, and lights with a patriot's fire the large intelligence and profound research that immortalise the page of Alison.

Pass from history to oratory. All men in modern times, famous for their eloquence, have recognised Demosthenes as their model. Many speakers in our own country have literally translated passages from his orations, and produced electrical effects upon sober English senators by thoughts first uttered to passionate Athenian crowds. Why is this? Not from the style—the style vanishes in translation—it is because thoughts the noblest appeal to emotions the most masculine and popular. You see in Demosthenes the man accustomed to deal with the practical business of men—to generalise details, to render complicated affairs clear to the ordinary understanding—and, at the same time, to connect the material interests of life with the sentiments that warm the breast and exalt the soul. It is the brain of an accomplished statesman in unison with a generous heart, thoroughly in earnest, beating loud and high—with the passionate desire to convince breathless thousands how to baffle a danger, and to save their country.

A little time longer, and Athens is free no more. The iron force of Macedon has banished liberty from the silenced Agora. But liberty had already secured to herself a gentle refuge in the groves of the Academe—there, still to the last, the Grecian intellect maintains the same social, humanising, practical aspect. The immense mind of Aristotle gathers together, as in a treasure-

house for future ages, all that was valuable in the knowledge that informs us of the earth on which we dwell—the political constitutions of States, and their results on the character of nations, the science of ethics, the analysis of ideas, natural history, physical science, critical investigation, *omne immensum peragravit;* and all that he collects from wisdom he applies to the earthly uses of man. Yet it is not by the tutor of Alexander, but by the pupil of Socrates, that our vast debt to the Grecian mind is completed. When we remount from Aristotle to his great master, Plato—it is as if we lookod from nature up to nature's God. There, amidst the decline of freedom, the corruption of manners—just before the date when, with the fall of Athens, the beautiful ideal of sensuous life faded mournfully away—there, on that verge of time stands the consoling Plato, preparing philosophy to receive the Christian dispensation, by opening the gates of the Infinite, and proclaiming the immortality of the soul. Thus the Grecian genius, ever kindly and benignant, first appears to awaken man from the sloth of the senses, to enlarge the boundaries of self, to connect the desire of glory with the sanctity of household ties, to raise up in luminous contrast with the inert despotism of the old Eastern world, the energies of free men, the duties of citizens; and, finally, accomplishing its mission as the visible Iris to states and heroes, melts into the rainbow, announcing a more sacred covenant, and spans the streams of the Heathen Orcus with an arch lost in the Christian's Heaven.

I have so exhausted your patience in what I have thus said of the Grecian literature, that I must limit closely my remarks upon the Roman. And here, indeed, the subject does not require the same space. In the Greek literature all is fresh and original; its very art is but the happiest selection from natural objects, knit together with the zone of the careless Graces. But the Latin literature is borrowed and adopted; and, like all imitations, we perceive at once that it is artificial—but in this imitation it has such exquisite taste, in this artificiality there is so much refinement of polish, so much stateliness of pomp, that it assumes an originality of its own. It has not found its

jewels in native mines, but it takes them with a conqueror's hand, and weaves them into regal diadems. Dignity and polish are the especial attributes of Latin literature in its happiest age; it betrays the habitual influence of an aristocracy, wealthy, magnificent, and learned. To borrow a phrase from Persius—its words sweep along as if clothed with the toga. Whether we take the sonorous lines of Virgil or the swelling periods of Cicero, the easier dignity of Sallust or the patrician simplicity of Cæsar, we are sensible that we are with a race accustomed to a measured decorum, a majestic self-control, unfamiliar to the more lively impulse of small Greek communities. There is a greater demarcation between the intellect of the writer and the homely sense of the multitude. The Latin writers seek to link themselves to posterity rather through a succession of select and well-bred admirers than by cordial identification with the passions and interests of the profane vulgar. Even Horace himself, so brilliant and easy, and so conscious of his *monumentum ære perennius*, affects disdain of popular applause, and informs us, with a kind of pride, that his Satires had no vogue in the haunts of the common people. Every bold schoolboy takes at once to Homer, but it is only the fine taste of the scholar that thoroughly appreciates Virgil; and only the experienced man of the world who discovers all the delicate wit, all the exquisite urbanity of sentiment, that win our affection to Horace in proportion as we advance in life. In short, the Greek writers warm and elevate our emotions as men—the Latin writers temper emotions to the stately reserve of high-born gentlemen. The Greeks fire us more to the inspirations of poetry, or (as in Plato and parts of Demosthenes) to that sublimer prose to which poetry is akin; but the Latin writers are, perhaps, on the whole, though I say it with hesitation, safer models for that accurate construction and decorous elegance by which classical prose attains critical perfection. Nor is this elegance effeminate, but, on the contrary, nervous and robust, though, like the statue of Apollo, the strength of the muscle is concealed by the undulation of the curves. But there is this, as a general result from the study of ancient letters, whether Greek or Roman,—both are the litera-

ture of grand races, of free men and brave hearts; both abound in generous thoughts and high examples; both, whatever their occasional licence, inculcate, upon the whole, the habitual practice of manly virtues; both glow with the love of country; both are animated by the desire of fame and honour. Therefore, whatever be our future profession and pursuit, however they may take us from the scholastic closet, and forbid any frequent return to the classic studies of our youth, still he whose early steps have been led into that land of demigods and heroes will find that its very air has enriched through life the blood of his thoughts, that he quits the soil with a front which the Greek has directed towards the stars, and a step which imperial Rome has disciplined to the march that carried her eagles round the world.

Not in vain do these lessons appeal to the youth of Scotland. From this capital still, as from the elder Athens, stream the lights of philosophy and learning. But your countrymen are not less renowned for the qualities of action than for those of thought. And you whom I address will carry with you, in your several paths to fortune, your national attributes of reflective judgment and dauntless courage. I see an eventful and stirring age expand before the rising generation. In that grand contest between new ideas and ancient forms, which may be still more keenly urged before this century expires, whatever your differences of political opinion, I adjure you to hold fast to the vital principle of civilisation. What is that principle? It is the union of liberty with order. The art to preserve this union has often baffled the wisest statesmen in stormy times; but the task becomes easy at once, if the people whom they seek to guide will but carry into public affairs the same prudent consideration which commands prosperity in private business. You have already derived from your ancestors an immense capital of political freedom; increase it if you will—but by solid investments, not by hazardous speculations. You will hear much of the necessity of progress, and truly; for wherever progress ends, decline invariably begins: but remember that the healthful progress of society is like the natural life of man—it consists in the gradual and harmonious development of all its constitutional

powers, all its component parts, and you introduce weakness and disease into the whole system, whether you attempt to stint or to force the growth. The old homely rule you prescribe to the individual is applicable to a State—"keep the limbs warm by exercise, and keep the head cool by temperance." But new ideas do not invade only our political systems; you will find them wherever you turn. Philosophy has altered the directions it favoured in the last century—it enters less into metaphysical inquiry; it questions less the relationships between man and his Maker; it assumes its practical character as the investigator of external nature, and seeks to adapt agencies before partially concealed to the positive uses of man. Here I leave you to your own bold researches; you cannot be much misled, if you remember the maxim, to observe with vigilance, and inquire with conscientious care. Nor is it necessary that I should admonish the sons of religious Scotland that the most daring speculations as to Nature may be accompanied with the humblest faith in those sublime doctrines that open heaven alike to the wisest philosopher and the simplest peasant. I do not presume to arrogate the office of the preacher; but, believe me, as a man of books, and a man of the world, that you inherit a religion which, in its most familiar form, in the lowly prayer that you learned from your mother's lips, will save you from the temptations to which life is exposed more surely than all which the pride of philosophy can teach. Nor can I believe that the man will ever go very far or very obstinately wrong who, by the mere habit of thanksgiving and prayer, will be forced to examine his conscience even but once a-day, and remember that the eye of the Almighty is upon him.

One word further. Nothing, to my mind, preserves a brave people true and firm to its hereditary virtues, more than a devout though liberal spirit of nationality. And it is not because Scotland is united with England that the Scotchman should forget the glories of his annals, the tombs of his ancestors, or relax one jot of his love for his native soil. I say not this to flatter you—I say it not for Scotland alone. I say it for the sake of the empire. For sure I am that, if ever the step

of the invader should land upon these kindred shores—there, wherever the national spirit is the most strongly felt—there, where the local affections most animate the breast—there will our defenders be the bravest. It would ill become me to enter into the special grounds of debate now at issue; but permit me to remind you that, while pressing with your accustomed spirit for whatever you may deem to be equal rights, you would be unjust to your own fame if you did not feel that the true majesty of Scotland needs neither the pomp of courts nor the blazonry of heralds. What though Holyrood be desolate—what though no king holds revels in its halls?—the empire of Scotland has but extended its range; and, blended with England, under the daughter of your ancient kings, peoples the Australian wilds that lay beyond the chart of Columbus, and rules over the Indian realms that eluded the grasp of Alexander. That empire does not suffice for you. It may decay—it may perish. More grand is the domain you have won over human thought, and identified with the eternal progress of intellect and freedom. From the charter of that domain no ceremonial can displace the impression of your seal. In the van of that progress no blazon can flaunt before that old Lion of Scotland [pointing to the flag suspended opposite]. This is the empire that you will adorn in peace; this is the empire that, if need be, you will defend in war. It is not here that I would provoke one difference in political opinion—but surely you, the sons of Scotland, who hold both fame and power upon the same tenure as that which secures civilisation from lawless force—surely you are not the men who could contemplate with folded arms the return of the dark ages, and quietly render up the haven that commands Asia on the one side and threatens Europe on the other, to the barbaric ambition of some new Alaric of the north. But, whether in reluctant war or in happier peace, I can but bid you be mindful of your fathers—learn from them how duties fulfilled in the world become honours after death; and in your various callings continue to maintain for Scotland her sublime alliance with every power of mind that can defend or instruct, soothe or exalt humanity.

XIII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOPETOUN ROOMS, EDINBURGH,

ON THE 20TH OF JANUARY 1854.

ON Friday evening, the 20th of January 1854, a public banquet was given in the Hopetoun Rooms, Edinburgh, in honour of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the newly installed President of the Associated Societies of the University. In returning thanks for the toast of his health—proposed by the Chairman, William Stirling, Esq. of Keir, M.P. for Perthshire—the following speech was delivered.

MR CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—I use no idle phrase when I say that I want words adequately to express the gratitude and pride with which I receive the honour that you have done me this evening. I here experience more than the proverbial hospitality for which your countrymen are famous; for wherever I look I see a host, and when I listened to the applause which you gave to the too flattering comments, rendered agreeable to you by the remarkable eloquence of our Chairman, I felt that in every host I had to greet a benefactor. For what benefit can be bestowed upon an author, or upon a public man, like that nobler sort of charity which forgets all faults in the desire to confer a kindness? In the earlier stages of our career we derive as much good from censure as from praise, and praise

like that which I have heard this evening might only blind us to our errors or relax our energies. In old age praise comes too late to stimulate or console, and might only sour us by its contrast with the years of toil and despondency that it might have soothed and cheered; but when honourable distinctions, the approval we most covet, reach us in the middle of our course, then they atone for all past disparagement and disappointment, and nerve all our energies to justify that opinion which pledges us to future efforts for improvement. In this sense of the word, you, my hosts, are my benefactors; and the liberal bounty with which you reward former labours will enrich the remainder of my days by grateful thoughts and hopeful aspirations.

It would become me to make only one or two observations upon those works to which your Chairman has referred with so much grace of expression, that I could almost have wished that I had not been the subject of his praise, in order that my enjoyment of its eloquence might have been unchecked by my consciousness that the thesis did not merit the ability displayed in the discourse. Your Chairman has singled out for elogium the variety of the literary objects I have attempted, however feebly, to execute. Upon this I would wish to make one observation. When I first commenced the career of authorship, I had brought myself to the persuasion that, upon the whole, it is best for the young writer not to give an exclusive preference to the development of one special faculty, even though that faculty be the one for which he has the most natural aptitude, but rather to seek to mature and accomplish, as far as he can, his whole intellectual organisation. I had observed that many authors, more especially, perhaps, writers of imagination and fiction, often excel only in one particular line of observation; nay, that, perhaps, they only write one thoroughly successful and original work, after which their ideas appear to be exhausted; and it seemed to me that the best mode to prevent that contrast between fertility in one patch of intelligence and barrenness of the surrounding district, was to bring under cultivation the entire soil at our command. This subjected me at first to what was then a charge, but which I have lived to hear as a compli-

ment—namely, that I had attempted too great a variety of authorship; yet, perhaps, it was to that conviction that I owe the continuance of whatever favour I have received from the public; for that favour no writer can hope long to retain unless he prove that he is constantly taking in a fresh supply of ideas, and that he is not compelled to whip and impoverish invention by drawing from the same field a perpetual succession of the same crop. And perhaps it may encourage younger writers, if I remind you that I was not successful at first in any new line that I thus attempted. My first efforts at prose composition were refused admittance into a magazine. My first novel was very little read, and it is not included in the general collection of my works. My first poetry was thought detestable, and my first play very nearly escaped being damned. Thus, perhaps few writers have been less intoxicated with the rapture of first success; and even when I did succeed, perhaps few writers, upon the whole, have been more unsparingly assailed by hostile critics. If I had relied solely upon my intellectual faculties, I must long since have retired from the field disheartened and beaten; but I owe it to that resolution which is at the command of all men who will only recollect that the first attribute of our sex is courage,—the resolution to fight the battles of literature and life with the same bull-dog determination with which I, and no doubt all of you, fought our battles at school—never to give in as long as we had a leg to stand upon,—that at last I have succeeded so far as to receive this honour in a capital renowned for its learning, and at the hands of a people who may well sympathise with any man who does not rely so much upon his intellect, no matter what the grade of that intellect may be, as upon his stout heart and his persevering labours.

Only one other remark I shall make upon a subject upon which no man can be expected to speak well—himself. I do trust that I have not lowered our common dignity as men of letters by the views I have entertained and advocated with respect to that lofty vocation. If letters are to be called a republic, it should be an aristocratic republic in the best sense of the term. We should observe a high standard of honour in all

our commercial transactions. Money may be as requisite to us as it is to all other classes of men, but money must never bribe us to the prostitution of talent, or to the debasement of conscience. If, like the ancient Genoese, we are traders in the sale of our produce—like the ancient Genoese, we should feel nobles in right of our order; not debasing our own aristocracy by fawning servility upon the more worldly distinctions of wealth and rank, which we assume the right boldly to censure or unenviously to support. In all our contests with each other, however manfully urged, we should still observe something of the gallantry and decorum of knighthood, not bespattering our opponent with mud from the kennel, nor assassinating a rival by a stab in the dark. These are some of the views with which I first entered upon literature in early youth—entered upon it as a profession—and I trust that, making generous allowance for indiscretions of judgment and temper, you will be of opinion that, upon the whole, my theory has not been belied by my practice.

I think I have some excuse for my egotism in the latter observations I have addressed to you, in the toast which I shall have to propose; for although that toast may be given by a man of no very elevated rank in literature, it should be given by one who has a full sense of the more than regal influence which literature exerts over the character and destiny of nations. The toast which I shall have to propose is, "The Literature of Scotland;" and, if I desired to convey to you some idea of its value to the society it adorns, I would ask you to compare it for one moment with the contemporaneous literature of France. When in the last century the chilling and comfortless influence of Material Philosophy spread from the French Encyclopedists to disorganise one world and to get rid altogether of the other, sheltering itself under the high authority of Locke—then arose that great school of Scotch metaphysicians, which, whatever may be its faults and shortcomings, at least restored to matter the necessity of soul, and proved that ideas were not merely fleeting impressions upon perishable brains. When, in France, poetry consisted only of frigid bombast or of insipid imitation,

then suddenly was heard "the bold free" song of Burns, calling poetry back to nature; and, later, the vivid romance of Sir Walter Scott restored to this grey nineteenth century the generous sentiments and healthy vigour of chivalric youth. Even now, when, in France, History has decked herself out in all the gewgaws of rhetorical artifice, in Scotland she has observed that severe exactitude without which she had better renounce the name of History, and call herself Fiction at once. It is in this fidelity to fact, which is to History what conscience is to a man, that Mr Burton has treated the History of Scotland; while a Frenchman—as Frenchmen have owned to me—can better learn the later history of his country in the pages of Alison than in those of Thiers and Lamartine. While, if you will look to that popular literature which, for the time being, most affects the moral character of the people, compare the healthy and manly interest of the 'Waverley Novels' with that glittering but corrupt series of French fictions, which only serve to show to what base uses genius can stoop to be applied. I do not deny the extraordinary brilliancy and force of recent French imaginative literature; but I do deny that it has been either the faithful mirror to ordinary nature, or fulfilled that higher task of ideal art, which seeks, by selecting from nature more than ordinary attributes of sublimity and beauty, to refine the taste and exalt the sentiments. And, false to that mission which the Poet, whether of prose or verse, is born to accomplish, it has contributed neither to the social happiness, the political wisdom, nor the national virtues of the French people; while, on the other hand, this praise at least must be given to the literature of Scotland, that it is not more valuable on account of the delight which it administers, than because of the lessons which it inculcates. I see present three of your great Scottish publishers, and I can conceive the pride with which they would hear any comparison between Scotch and French literature. I can conceive with what pride my friends, the Messrs Blackwood, would recall the great share they have had in the elevation of our national literature, by the production of histories like those of Alison—by such fictions as those of Warren and Galt—by

the universal genius of Professor Wilson—and by that time-honoured Magazine which, though it has dealt some hard blows in support of his literary, critical, and political canons, yet has charmed its opponents themselves—it was an opponent to me once—by its hearty and genial tone, and by its unrivalled combination of solid erudition with unrestricted fancy. I can conceive the pride with which Mr Black will reflect upon that immense undertaking, the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and upon those immortal works, the 'Waverley Novels,' which I understand have now passed into his hands; and when I refer to popular instruction, why, the very heart of Mr Chambers must leap within him, and he must think how much Great Britain really does owe to those who extend philosophy, instruction, and delight to the working classes, without one single appeal to any passion that can demoralise or pervert. Let me here for a moment remind you that I am a Conservative, in order to say on behalf of that party that we too can be Liberals with Mr Chambers whenever the object is not to pull down one class, but to elevate the other.

If I were to speak of the obligations which I myself owe to Scottish literature, I should only have to imitate the friar who came to a French town in order to preach a sermon upon a certain occasion. His sermon went off tolerably well, and the friar was hospitably received and sumptuously regaled. The next day, to his great dismay, he was told it was a holiday in honour of the patron saint of the town, and that all the congregation were assembling in the church in order to listen to the new sermon which he was expected to deliver. The poor friar had only brought one sermon with him, and that was already delivered. What was he to do? He got into the pulpit, and, mark what the friar said: "My brethren," said he, looking very solemnly round the church, "certain malignant persons have said there was heresy in the sermon I delivered to you yesterday; and, in order to show you how false is this accusation, I propose to preach it to you all over again." Now, I am afraid I cannot imitate the felicitous self-possession of the friar, nor repeat here all I said in Queen Street Hall the other evening

with respect to my own obligations to the learning and genius of Scotland, but still I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying a few words that may serve to show how closely connected is the literature of Scotland with the romantic impressions of my youth. I recall the joyous sensations with which, while yet in my boyhood, I entered Scotland for the first time; I recall the pride with which I leaped over that part of the Clyde which leads to the Cave of Burley—Morton's Leap, I think it was called—pride to think that I had something in common with a hero of Walter Scott's. I recall the enthusiasm with which I explored the scenes of the Lady of the Lake, fancying that I saw the Knight of Snowdon upon the bank, and the Lady herself upon the water. I recall still more vividly the night on which I lay down to rest under a hedge on the field of Bannockburn, exulting to think that I was upon the very ground which Bruce had hallowed to freedom, and Burns to immortal song. And it is well in mature life, when the world is too much with us, to revive the freshness of young emotions, and to rekindle—what, I trust, for my part, will never die within me till my grave—the passion for that real freedom, without which races have no history, and for that genuine poetry, without which man, in resigning imagination, knows not the nobler half of his own soul.

A toast was given in the early part of the evening which referred to our army and navy, and which was acknowledged by a gallant admiral* whom, I trust, we shall never see cruising in the Black Sea. It reminds me that we are apparently on the eve of a conflict with a great Power, which, if it could obtain its ultimate object in the keys of the Bosphorus, would open to civilised Europe the risk of that irruption by hungry and barbarous tribes, which we had hoped the strong hand of Charlemagne had checked for ever. The wisest statesman cannot foresee what might be the issue of that war, if it should extend from a conflict for territory to a strife of opinion. When we look at the inflammable materials in Italy, in Germany, throughout continental Europe, and, in fact, through a great portion of Russia herself, we cannot fail to call to mind, with some anxiety, that

* The Sheriff and Vice-Admiral of Orkney, W. E. Aytoun.

old prophecy of Napoleon—"The day will come when Europe will be all Republican or all Cossack." But for my part I do hope that the spirit of our people will bring this war to a prompt, short, and decisive issue—before the original cause is lost sight of in the complicated objects which all unnecessary procrastination, all feebleness and half measures, only serve to bring into new and menacing existence; so that before this time next year, the cause of civilisation which Great Britain supports with her arms, may achieve that full triumph which can alone lead to the permanent re-establishment of peace, and that (returning to the toast I have to propose) our deeds may then be such as an Aytoun may not blush to sing, nor an Alison to record. As long as Providence permits this empire to endure, may every Englishman whom you receive as a guest in your capital, feel the same pride that I do in an equal union with the children of Scotland. We are bound together by ties stronger than Acts of Parliament or treaties of parchment. We have, in common, the fame of our writers and the glory of our arms; and I do not believe that anything can dissever or alienate those who have a common heritage in Milton and in Scott, and a history, one and indivisible, in every page which speaks of Trafalgar and Waterloo. Fill your glasses to the brim, and drink with me fresh honours to that literature which, always hardy and masculine even when most thoughtful and refined, will render men braver under the necessities of war, as it has made them wiser amidst the tranquillities of peace.

XIV

A SPEECH

DELIVERED AT

THE LEEDS MECHANICS' INSTITUTION

ON THE 25TH OF JANUARY 1854.

ON the evening of Wednesday the 25th of January 1854, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was introduced to the assembled members of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution by their President, Mr Wheelhouse. Upon this occasion the following speech was delivered.

[M.P. for Hertfordshire from General Election, 22d July 1852, until raised to the Peerage on the 13th of July 1866, by the title of Baron Lytton of Knebworth.]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—A few days since I had the honour to address the students of Edinburgh (an intellectual and noble audience it was) upon questions defined by their academical course of study, or suited to the professions to which they were severally destined. I now address not so much scholastic pupils, with paths through knowledge prepared and guided, and with ample leisure to follow up the studies they may select; but youths, and mature men of every age, engaged in active practical pursuits, snatching at such learning as books may give in the intervals of recreation or repose. Knowledge there is the task-work; knowledge here is the holiday. But in both these communities, in the quiet University and in the busy manufac-

turing town, I find the same grand idea; I mean the recognition of intelligence as the supreme arbiter of all those questions which, a century ago, were either settled by force or stifled by those prejudices which are even stronger than law. And it is no wonder that every class nowadays strives for its fair proportion of knowledge. In ancient times nobles demanded the right to fortify their castles: citizens demanded the privilege to bear arms. But now the claims of both are conceded; it is education that fortifies the castle of the noble, and it is education which supplies to the citizen his arms. And don't let us believe that this sense of the vital necessity of knowledge to every class that would hold its own, is confined to the middle and the working classes alone—it no less acts upon those orders most set apart for indolence by rank and wealth; and I have been amazed to see the advance which has been made since I was a boy (though I am now but in middle life) in the quality and degree of instruction bestowed upon the heirs to princely fortunes or illustrious names. I rejoice to see this generous ambition pervading all classes. I rejoice, for the sake of the middle class, when I see it warm and enlighten the two extremes of our social system—for the atmosphere is healthy in proportion as the sunlight is equally diffused; when no stormy cloud rests on the mountain-top above you, and no vapour, charged with pestilence and fever, arises up from the marshes below. Gentlemen, I am not come here to speak of the advantages of knowledge. If I were addressing some infant institution, struggling for existence in remote rural districts, I might enlarge on a subject grown a dry commonplace to you; but prate of the advantages of knowledge to this great assembly, to the foremost institute of the kind which our country boasts! No; it becomes me here rather to remind you that if by knowledge were meant only that which books and schools can bestow, it requires something more to make a man virtuous or a people great. Human reason, at the best, is but human reason still; and we have all had the first French Revolution sufficiently dinned into our ears to remember that it was flattery which drove Reason out of her five senses, and she became only fit for a madhouse the moment she was

set up as a goddess. There are two things I daresay you are often condemned to hear treated with ridicule and contempt; the one is the wisdom of our ancestors, and the other is the character and pretensions of the age in which we live. Nay, perhaps you have heard the very same persons who disdain the generations that have gone before, as dull savages without railways and steam-engines, still sentimentally despise the present time as commonplace and vulgar—complain that we have no great men, and no great ideas, and that railways and steam-engines are all that we care for. When I hear either of these two things said, I am reminded of the jest of the celebrated wit who exclaimed, "How rich I should become if I could buy those persons, so wise in their self-conceit, at their just market value, and then sell them again at the price they set upon themselves!" That would be to buy at the cheapest market and to sell at the dearest. Now, as to the wisdom of our ancestors, we may, I think, leave them to speak for themselves. Their intellect has left us writers whom we may strive to emulate, but can never hope to surpass; a political constitution which we may enlarge or repair, but which we can never perhaps altogether change for the better; and an empire on which, it is said, that the sun never sets, though it commenced from these small northern islands on which, I am sorry to say, the sun seldom condescends to shine. The divine commandment tells us to honour our parents that our days may be long in the land. But the parents of a people are the first great fathers who made them free, and this people will live long in the land according as they hold in grateful veneration those who redeemed that land from the wilderness, and left their descendants to become the civilisers of the world, not more by the pomp of London than by the industry of Leeds. With these brief words on behalf of our ancestors, let us take a glance at some of the characteristics of the age in which we live, and see if it deserves the contempt with which it has been treated. And first, gentlemen, we hear a great deal said as to the vast progress which mankind has made. Now, let us here pause and examine; there is quite enough to justify us as Englishmen. There is no doubt of the progress we have

made in England, but let us moderate our conceit as members of the great family of man. Take down a map of the world, and see how small a portion of it is yet civilised at all. Look at the three ancient quarters of the globe: Africa remains the same domain of savages and wild beasts; Asia has fallen back from the civilisation which produced such cities as Nineveh and Babylon; and even in Europe what vast and fertile territories, once the seats of empire, now present only a crude or degenerate civilisation. In Spain you pass through valleys of the richest soil; the corn where it is lazily sown withers as it stands. You ask why? "No use to cut it down—no markets, and no roads." In Italy the arts languish, literature is stifled, men's minds are divided between the most lifeless infidelity and the most abject superstition. In that Tuscany which gave to modern Europe the earliest lessons of literature and freedom, the very shape of your hat might condemn you to the Austrian's sabre; and the royal representative of the learned Medici thinks heaven and earth are coming together if an English gentlewoman drops a Bible in the cottage of the poor. While on the borders of the civilised world, happily as yet divided from us by the barriers of nature, the Emperor of all the Russias rules over barbarous millions, and shocks alike the civilisation and religion of this century, by affecting the zeal of the Crusader to disguise the ambition of the Vandal. Out of all Europe there are only three great races which are in the full vigour of progressive life. The Great Germanic race—in which I include the kindred population of the Baltic, such as Sweden and Norway, and the populations, also kindred, of Belgium and Holland—the people of France, and the people of Great Britain. Well, then, if you look back to history you will find that ever since Greece arose, much the same proportions of mankind attain to civilisation at the same period, and the vast populations of the universe remain very little changed. Civilisation obeys the same law as the ocean; it has its ebb and its flow, and where it advances on one shore it recedes from the other; thus, while it has left, dry and sterile, the Italy which had boasted the empire of the ancient world, and Spain which had seized the treasures of the new, it flows with a

vigorous wave towards the American and Australasian shores, which we ourselves have peopled; and if ever the time should come when Europe shall grow old as Asia, and London shall become to posterity what Tyre and Sidon are to us, we may still hope that our spirit will survive in young races whose lips will speak our hardy language, and in whose veins will roll the blood of the men whom I see around me, warming hearts which beat loud and high with every thought that can ennoble freedom and exalt humanity. But what moral results are we to gain from the fact that civilisation never spreads over the earth in equal and impartial tides? Any check to our desire of progress? No, but some caution against those vague yearnings for the indefinite perfectibility of the whole human race, which misled the dreamers of the last century. Let us be content to leave the question of the absolute perfectibility of mankind to the wisdom of the Creator, and let us, like men of sense, attempt, as far as possible, to civilise—and if the word be not too strong for mortals—to perfect ourselves. That is why I like the old word patriotism, which has gone out of fashion, much better than the many new words which have come into vogue, and which have often so wide a signification that half the duties of life slip through them. For my part, I have no grudge against the Polynesians; I have a distant respect for the Chinese; I should be glad if the Caffres and Bushmen eat beef and mutton instead of grubs and opossums. But as for all the vivid and intense emotion which, out of the nearer circle of my life, would fire my heart and nerve my arm, I am content, if they preserve full vigour and life no further than the limits which embrace the freedom, the safety, the happiness and renown of my native country and her glorious people. And let me not be told that this is a narrow illiberal sentiment, at variance with that more expanded philanthropy which can behold with equal love—perhaps with equal indifference—the Englishman and the Cossack! I say, on the contrary, the more we can strengthen the moral character and power of England, the more we advance what is really practical in the ends of universal philanthropy by the civilisation that our commerce extends from shore to shore, and

by the successful and contagious example of freedom too wise for licence, and religion too pure for persecution. Well, these three great European races, the German, the French, and the English, differ in certain aspects of civilisation; but they all have some great principles in common, and the first that I shall refer to as honourably distinguishing this age from those who have gone before it, is the milder spirit of humanity. Now, even abroad, in spite of intervals of civil discord and convulsion, we may observe the advance which has been made within the last sixty years. Take but a single instance. Compare the Reign of Terror in France at the close of the last century, with that sublime and awful moment when law and order were rent asunder round the fallen throne of Louis Philippe, and murder and rapine, seized with horror at their own first impulse, dropped the red flag of blood at the feet of Lamartine. But happier circumstances have perhaps allowed this country to take precedence here. It is this milder spirit of humanity which has raised up all those new questions, not heard of before this century, affecting the condition of the people; it is this which seeks to carry health and cleanliness into the abodes of misery and squalor; it is this which has directed merciful attention even to the foes and outlaws of society, seeking to reform criminals rather than punish them; it is this which has introduced hopeful discipline into our prison-houses, and, except in the rarest cases, has struck the punishment of death out of our criminal code. Naturally then, and concomitant with this development of humanity, philosophy takes a more material and less speculative direction than in the last century. I grant that we direct philosophy towards nature in order to improve the actual condition, the material existence of man, and therefore we have been called a material age—an age at variance with spiritual objects, or what is called the poetry of life. I cannot see the justice of this reproach. I cannot see, for instance, how the working man should be less inclined to spiritual objects when he breathes pure air, in a comfortable house, than when he wrestled with ague in a miserable hovel. I don't see why we should be less spiritual or poetical either in proportion as we discover that

the Divine beneficence has stored universal Nature, even to the gas which had for countless ages escaped from us in smoke—with agencies which surpass the wildest tales of the Eastern genii—agencies that are the poetry of Nature herself, and which we can only subject to our control according as we task the sublimer faculties which separate us from the brute; and let me not be told that the occupations of the mechanic, who, like Aladdin, rubs the lamp that bids the genii rise, are at variance with the poetry of life. Why (to-day as I passed through the mill of Messrs Marshall), I asked myself, "What is poetry in its highest form, in the drama or the epic?" It is contrivance and design. It is selecting from Nature her raw material, her scattered objects, drawing from them new beauties unknown before, and weaving the desultory threads into one artistic whole. As all colours come from the rainbow, so each variety of skilful and observant labour—whether it adorn the loom or animate the printed page—come from the same prismatic source of intelligence, which reflects upon the cloud—no matter what shape that cloud itself may assume—the rays that embellish the world. Gentlemen, naturally again, as science takes a more practical direction, there comes forth another principle which honourably distinguishes this age from the century that went before. In the last century, the common object of philosophers and reformers was bent upon destroying. All schemes in politics were vague and indefinite, except the one passionate desire to get rid of whatever existed. That was caught from Voltaire and Paine. But the object of this is to construct rather than to destroy. The practical is the first thing we think of. Why, we did not even destroy the stage-coaches—they died a natural and peaceful death of themselves, after we had constructed railways. But if the last century had discovered the steam-engine, I believe they would have destroyed all the coaches before a single girder had been put down upon a single line. The last century sought to level. Well, we seek to level also; but our levelling is in a different spirit, I trust. Not by pulling down the one class, but by lifting up the other. And in this is seen another great principle that is most honourably characteristic of our age. Ever

since the peace, there has grown up in these three great races whom I have indicated as in the full progress of civilisation, a great desire to educate the masses—in other words, to level the disparities of instruction. Now, of these three great communities—the German, the French, and the English—the Germans are pre-eminent, especially in the kingdom of Prussia, for the attention the State has devoted to school instruction. And this school instruction is on the whole most beneficial to the moral condition of the German people. Nevertheless, this uniformity of the State drill has given rather a tameness and monotony to the national character; and the education bestowed upon the boy is not sufficiently carried out to the man by the civil institutions, that keep ideas ever fresh, and energies always braced. The Germans are very good, but perhaps—out of Leeds, at least—they are rather slow. Now, in France, education is far less diffused than it is in Germany, and it is also inferior in quality. But as far as it has gone, it has not been attended in France with that benefit to the moral elevation of the people which we might have anticipated. Indeed, it appears from the statistical tables of Mons. Gueray—and though these returns have been disputed; the fact is really unquestionable—that France is perhaps, the only country in the world where upon the whole there has been a greater proportion of criminals well educated, who have been guilty of the worst offences, than there have been criminals who are altogether ignorant. But I will by-and-by show you that this fact must not be taken as proving anything against the great question of extended education. In Great Britain school education is far less advanced than it is in Germany; and we are told—but I doubt whether we are told correctly—that the school education of Great Britain is inferior, as regards reading and writing, to that of France. And yet, I don't know if I shall startle you when I state that all the ends of a sound national education are even now far more efficaciously attained in England than they are either in Germany or France. For what is the object of instruction, unless it be to elevate our nature by great moral qualities, or to enrich our experience by sound, vigorous, and practical ideas? And do you suppose this

comes from reading and writing only, from grammars and copy-books, excellent things though grammars and copy-books are? Why, the ancient Athenians were the most intelligent community the world ever saw; and yet there were few of those who had conquered the Persians, or gazed on the Parthenon, or listened to Pericles, or applauded the works of Æschylus and Sophocles, who knew how to write or read. What was it that taught them to be aspiring, yet practical, to be vigilant, and yet humane? Why, that which teaches the Englishman—the talk and the habits of everyday life, the custom of self-government, the consciousness of liberty, and the electrical transit of stirring ideas, that comes from the common interest in public affairs—the constant intercourse between man and man; that frank publicity of opinion, and that sympathy of united numbers, which carry to the multitude, even to the unlettered multitude, every more useful and vivid thought which genius or study originates in the few. It is all this which teaches the Englishman, and gives to our people their vast superiority in the real enlightenment of their common ideas, and the masculine energy with which they carry those ideas into practice. We must judge of the instruction of a people as we do of the intellect of a man—by the fruit it displays. And if we were behind the rest of the world in that knowledge which best becomes a nation, do you think in those political contests, when the humblest among us—yes, the masses, most called the ignorant—have been stirred up to the very depths, we should have left such signal examples of moderation combined with firmness? Look at the ease with which our English intelligence has gained by reforms, all which German mystics and French fanatics have lost by revolutions. Is not this of itself a proof that there is a silent education, distinct from that of the schools, always at work within the people of these realms, and which, when it comes into action, exhibits an intellectual power not yet found in those whom State policy may more instruct as children, but whom civil institutions less nerve and discipline as men? But do not think that I am indifferent or lukewarm to education in the common meaning of the word—to the diffusion of cheap books, or cheap schools.

No. If we gain so much from the mere fact that we are born in England, accustomed to a free voice in all our affairs, and trained by inventive labour to reflect on what we would do to-day and hope to do to-morrow, how much more shall we gain if, in addition to these primitive sources of masculine idea, we could add the refinement and the method which come from early systematic education! Sooner or later we may have this question brought before us, and examined in all its details. For my part I trust that education in this country will never be altogether paid for and altogether regulated by the State. I hope in this, as in all, that we shall never part with the vital principle of self-government in contradistinction to centralisation. But I hope I shall live to see the day when here in England, as in America, the education of the people may come from the desire of the people, consenting in local districts to levy a rate upon themselves for education, thus interested in seeing that the education is of the best kind that their money can produce, and adapted not to some rigid and unflexible State machinery, but open to every improvement which the experience of one district can suggest to the emulation of another. But do not let us forget, when summing up the causes why we are more practically instructed than other countries, notwithstanding our deficiency in school education—do not let us forget what I conceive to be the foremost cause of all—I mean the familiar acquaintance of our whole people, from the palace to the cottage, with the Scriptures; and to the profound reverence with which men of the highest intellectual culture, and the most daring speculation as to science, still acknowledge in the Bible the purest standard of all excellence to which human virtue can aspire. And I hold it to be another honourable distinction to this century, that although there was never a period when we were less inclined to fly to the law for a prosecutor, yet there never was a period in our history when public opinion would more disdain those ribald attempts to sneer down the Gospel, which disgraced the so-called philosophy of the last century. And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we may perhaps see why education in France has not been productive of that moral good we might have anticipated.

Though France has recovered her churches and her priesthood, she has not recovered from the wholesale infidelity of the last century—from that time when she exchanged the Saviour for Voltaire. The Bible is not in the cottage of her peasants, in the parlour of her traders; and a few years ago it was even travestied upon the stage. It is not only the comparative absence of that familiar teacher of right and wrong that we may lament throughout France, but it is because one clear and acknowledged standard of morality is not thus before the eyes of the great bulk of the population; that the public have accepted a popular literature which only serves to corrupt the intelligence it appeals to. What does it signify if a whole people can read and write, if the books most thrown in their way only serve to stimulate the baser passions, to set class against class, to loosen the ties of hearth and home, of property and order; and though they may thus excite to revolutions, that possibly may be just in themselves, yet the moment the revolution comes, make democracy frightened at its own shadow; and every man who has a rood of ground, or a shilling in the savings bank, or a wife that he would prefer to keep to himself, fly at the first thunderclap which foretells the tempest of social anarchy to the grim shelter of despotic force? Had the people of France possessed less of what they call philosophy, and more of the common-sense which the Scriptures teach in their lessons of fortitude and temperance, their political opinions would not have excited the terror now taken from wild social doctrines; nor would the French people have passed through three revolutions to find that, at the end, they are not a step nearer to real freedom than they were when they first began. Well, then, I think you will see that a good education includes the school—but it requires something more; and here don't let me forget, amongst our other advantages, the habits of our domestic life. Whatever may be the faults of our men, all countries agree that our women are pre-eminent for the concentration of thought and affection in the circle of their homes. I turn to the fair faces that I see around me, and say gratefully that two-thirds of what have made us Englishmen what we are —many a quiet lesson, never to be forgotten, of fortitude under

childish trouble; of self-sacrifice and control of temper, from motives, not of fear, but of affection; of simple honesty and plain truth; of reliance on Heaven in hours of temptation and moments of despondency—we owe to the English mothers who soothed our infant sorrows, shared in our boyish hopes, and taught us in our earliest prayers to pray that our Divine Father would bless others beside ourselves. There are few of us who have succeeded honourably in the world that will not acknowledge that we owe far less to the school than to the precepts and example that we found at home, and especially to the gentle precepts of a mother's lips and the stainless example of a mother's life. I am rejoiced, therefore, to comply with the request of a gentleman who said to me, on entering the hall—"Say something in favour of adding a female class to this institution." Perhaps there is not a town in this country in which the females of the working classes appear less to require new facilities for education than they do at Leeds. I am told that there is scarcely a manufactory to which there is not a school for girls attached. Nevertheless, it would be an honour and a credit to this institution if you could add female classes, and endeavour as far as possible to fit women to be the worthy companions of intelligent men. Only I would say, if you should be able to comprehend those who are to be the wives of mechanics and working men, I would entreat you not to be too elevated in your notions—I would entreat you to remember the useful duty of teaching the wife of the working man how to make the money go as far as possible and the home as comfortable. Well, then, Ladies and Gentlemen, it seems there are two kinds of education: there is one I call life education, which we acquire at home, in the streets, in the market-place—behind the counter, the loom, the plough—the education we acquire from life,—and this I call life education; there is also what I call school education—the education we acquire from books. I have endeavoured, and I hope not unsuccessfully, to show that in the first kind of education—life education—we are far in advance of all countries in the ancient quarters of the globe; but it appears we are behind some countries in school education. You, as English-

men, will never let this be so. You are Englishmen, and I am sure will never consent to be beaten by any country whatever. Let us, then, put our shoulders to the wheel, and see that we are here also in our proper place in the world. I turn now to this great Institute at Leeds, and I think we are on the fair road to it. I have always been a cordial admirer of the principle of Mechanics' Institutes. I think they combine all those best signs of the age to which I have referred. The milder humanity—the practical purpose or desire to construct rather than to destroy, and lift up the one class, not pull down the other. All these are to be found concentrated in Mechanics' Institutes: and I discover in the very humblest of such societies the germ of much good. I do assure you without flattery, that I feel prouder of England and of this calumniated nineteenth century when I look at the printed report of the present condition of this great Institution at Leeds, for I see there the fullest comprehension of what a great intellectual institute ought to become: the library, the lecture-room, and the class-rooms—offering to the child, the adult, and the grown-up man, not only the meagre rudiments, but the amplitude of a generous and liberal education. And you here do that which they have failed to do in Germany and France. You don't merely give to the child a hasty education, and then send him loose upon the world, but you remember that education is the work of a life, and you continue that education to the man. Now there is another suggestion which I should like to make, though I do it with some little apprehension as to how you will take it. You are all agreed that you would like to make education as perfect as possible: if you are, do recollect that we happen to have a body as well as a mind, and that it is not enough that a people should have thought and reflection unless they also have health and vigour. Now it is an old saying, "That all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and therefore to every good school there is attached a playground. Well, why should you not have a playground attached o this institute at Leeds? Why not, as your funds increase, purchase a piece of ground in your immediate neighbourhood, which may serve hereafter for specimens of natural history, but at once,

and more especially for gymnastic exercises, for quoits and prisoners' bars for the young, and bowls and skittles for the more sedate—health and exercise for all? You might dress the ground with booths and summer-houses, so as to allure the presence of such ladies as I now survey; and by the simple rules, to separate at proper hours and exclude spirituous liquors, these amusements would never, I am sure, be abused by indecorum. By doing this, you will increase the number of your pupils in the summer months, when they must fall off; and would tend to promote your own object by cultivating a friendly intercourse in the ease and familiarity of lively sport between the millionaire, the tradesman, and the mechanic. You would help on that lagging sanitary question, by calling the nerves and muscles into cheerful exercise; and many a man before so bilious and melancholy as to take the gloomiest view of things in general, and especially of his own position in the town of Leeds, would rise blithe to his Monday's work, from his Saturday recreations, and look forward with the pleasure of a child to his next half-holiday. If you think me too theoretical in that suggestion, you must excuse me for two reasons: first, because I happen to be a bit of a scholar, and I remember that the ancient Greeks were the finest race of antiquity, because they considered that a sound mind was only half a blessing unless it was accompanied with a sound body; and secondly, because I have been brought up and reared in the country, and I learnt there a love for those old English sports, which has done me good service through life; for I never could have gone through the brain-work which I have contrived to do, in spite of a constitution naturally delicate, if I had not, while the frame was yet growing, braced the nerves and sharpened the energies, by all the runs and leaps, by all the balls I hit at cricket, and all the kicks I received at football, and all the wild laughter and joyous mirth which I owe to the dear old playground. That reminds me that I am here not only as the member of a class which must always have the deepest sympathy with intellectual labour—I mean the class of authors, —but I am here also as a member of another class, which is supposed to be less acceptable in manufacturing towns: I am one

of the agricultural vampires—I am guilty of being a country gentleman, and even a county member; still, somehow or other, I feel quite at home here. Now, shall I tell you the truth? I daresay you and I may differ upon many political subjects; but upon this neutral ground I am sure—no matter what books I had written—you would not be so kind to me, nor I feel so much at my ease with you, unless by this time we had both discovered that we have got sound English hearts; and that though we may quarrel as to the mode of doing it, still we are all equally resolved to keep this England of ours the foremost country in the world. In a free state it will happen that every class will strive to press forward what it conceives, rightly or erroneously, its own claims and interests, but in proportion as we instruct all, each will in time acquire its due share of influence; and far from that hypocritical cowardice which often makes a man throw over in one assembly the class which he is bound to advocate in another, I own to you, wherever I look I see so much merit in every division of our people, that whatever class I had been born and reared in, of that class I should have been justly proud. There is not a class of which I should not have said, "I belong to those who made England great." If I had been born a peasant, let me be but self-taught and self-risen, and I would not have changed my brotherhood with Burns for the pedigree of a Howard. If I had been born a mechanic or manufacturer —for allow me to class together the employer and the employed —they fulfil the same mission, and their interests ought to be the same; I say if I had been born one of these, I should have said, "Mine is the class which puts nations themselves into the great factory of civilisation; mine is the class which has never yet been established in any land but what it has made the poor state rich, and the small state mighty." If I had been born a trader, the very humblest of that order, I should have boasted proudly of the solid foundation of public opinion, and of national virtues, which rest upon the spirit and energy, upon the integrity and fair dealing, by which that great section of our middle class have given a tone and character to our whole people. Why, we have been called a nation of shopkeepers, and

shopkeepers we are whenever we keep a debtor and creditor account with other nations; scrupulously paying our debts to the last farthing, and keeping our national engagements with punctuality and good faith. But it is owing much to the high spirit and sense of honour which characterises the British trader, that the word "gentleman" has become a title peculiar to us, not as in other countries, resting only upon pedigrees and coats of arms, but embracing all who unite gentleness with manhood. And nation of shopkeepers though we be, yet we all, from the duke in his robes to the workman in his blouse, become a nation of gentlemen, whenever some haughty foreigner touches our common honour, whenever some paltry sentiment in the lips of princes rouses our generous scorn, or whenever some chivalrous action or noble thought ennobles the sons of peasants. If I had been told that the habits of trade made men niggardly and selfish, I should have pointed to the hospitals, to the charities, to the educational institutions which cover the land, and which have been mainly founded or largely endowed by the munificence of traders. If I had been told there was something in trade which stinted the higher or more poetical faculty, I should have pointed to the long list of philosophers, divines, and poets that have sprung from the ranks of trade, and, not to cite minor names, I should have said, "It is we who share with agriculture, have the glory of producing the woolstapler's son who rules over the intellectual universe under the name of Shakespeare." This pride of class I should have felt, let me only be born an Englishman, whether as peasant, mechanic, manufacturer, or tradesman; but being born and reared amongst those who derive their subsistence from the land, I am not less proud that I belong to that great section of our countrymen from whom have proceeded so large a proportion of those who have helped to found that union of liberty and intellect which binds together the audience I survey—from whom came the great poets Chaucer and Gower, Spenser and Dryden, and Byron and Scott; from whom came the great pioneers of science, Worcester and Cavendish, Boyle and Bacon; from whom came so large a number of the heroes and patriots who in all the grand epochs of constitutional pro-

gress,—from the first charter wrung from Norman tyrants, from the first resistance made to the Roman pontiffs, down to the law by which Camden (the son of a country squire) achieved the liberty of the press—down to the Reform Bill, by which Russell, Grey, and Stanley, and Lambton, connected Leeds for ever with the genius of Macaulay,—have furnished liberty with illustrious chiefs, and not less with beloved martyrs? Out of that class of country gentlemen came the Hampden who died upon the field, and Sydney who perished on the scaffold. Why do I say this? Because I would not pass from this town without adjuring you never to believe, whatever may be our faults, and defects, and prejudices, that as a general body we rural Thanes and cultivators could desire to destroy or arrest the work which our fathers assisted you to build, or that we are so dull as not to know that if the spare capital from land first called manufacturers into existence, so in return manufactures increased the value of the land according as they add to the wealth of the community. But I will own to you fairly—for by this time you must have seen that I am here to speak out my whole mind—that the class and the party to which I belong do regard, not with grudge and hostility, but with anxiety and some awe the immense power which every year, as civilisation expands, congregates more and more in the dense population of manufacturing towns; we do feel that with populations like yours, may rest the ultimate solution of some of the gravest of our political and social problems. But sure I am that the surest mode, under Providence, of bringing all problems of existing civilisation to a favourable issue, is to proportion intelligence to power. And perhaps it may be through institutions like this that every year Leeds and Manchester may contrast more and more the alternate ferocity and submission which have been the reproach of Lyons and Marseilles. I have often thought that the ancients endeavoured to convey to us a type of the true moral force in their sublime statue of Hercules in repose. You see there the gigantic strength which has achieved such glorious labours evincing the consciousness of its power by the majesty of its calm; while in those mighty arms which have purified earth from its monsters,

the artist has placed an infant child smiling securely in the face of the benignant God. Keep that image ever before you—it is the type of that power which should belong to knowledge, and which is always gentle in proportion to the victories it achieves. I feel while I am speaking as if the anxiety and awe that I had before expressed were already melting away in that confidence with which I think we Englishmen may trust the future not only to the school education which we are met here to encourage and diffuse, but also to our experience of a thousand years in self-government, to the mildness which our domestic habits should communicate to our political conflicts, and, above all, at least in my opinion, to our secure inheritance of that Divine Book which teaches humanity to nations, and will whisper to us all, in the fever of strife, or in the flush of triumph, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" and "Do unto other men what you would that they should do unto you."

XV.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 15TH OF MAY 1854.

ON Monday, the 15th of May 1854, the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Excise Duties Bill gave rise to a lengthened debate, at the close of which the motion was carried by 303 votes to 195. About midway in the discussion the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—I cordially concur in the desire expressed by all gentlemen who have risen on this side of the House to assist the Ministers of the Crown in providing the necessary means to carry on with vigour and effect the war in which we are unhappily engaged; and as all that may weaken the Government by party disputes on matters of domestic policy would, in my judgment, be injurious to that aspect of moral power which this country should present to Europe, I rejoiced when the noble Lord the Member for London—much, I think, to his credit, and with the respectful sympathy of the House—withdrew from discussion a Reform Bill which must inevitably have provoked a most determined opposition. I did hope that opposition itself might remain dormant during the rest of the session. I was not prepared to expect that the dispute which the leader of

the Government in this House so patriotically forbore would be forced upon us in another shape by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That right hon. gentleman is too experienced a politician not to know that he has deliberately introduced into his Budget the very item that must revive the most bitter resentment of the class against which it operates, and that most of us on this side of the House would be traitors to our constituents if we submitted to it without a struggle. The issue of that struggle may be against us, but I fear that the very proposition of the right hon. gentleman will materially weaken the hands of the Government in the fitting conduct of this war, because it elaborately tends to create the deepest dissatisfaction in that very portion of our people upon whom for the endurance of war all Governments must proverbially depend. I shall imitate the example of those who have preceded me, and refrain from discussing the general propositions of the Budget. With respect to the proposed duplication of the income and property tax, however, I must at least enter a strong demur against the assertion so glibly made by the right hon. gentleman that it is impossible to reconstruct it upon a more equitable basis; but, whether this be or be not possible, I say that a direct tax in which the whole mass of the public complain of anomalies and injustice, not rendered more tolerable by your assertion that they are not susceptible of mitigation, and avowedly to be continued for the whole duration of the war—maintained, as it were, upon that tenure—is precisely that tax which the Emperor of Russia will rejoice to hear that you have doubled. However, there is at least this consolation left to those who are to pay the income and property tax, that its anomalies and injustice are fairly parcelled out among the wealth and industry of the community down to those whose incomes reach the limit of £100 a-year; while the right hon. gentleman then proceeds to select an especial article of home production, and with a complacent eulogium on the principle of fair distribution, calculates to raise from the additional tax—which, if finally paid by the consumer, particularly affects one single department of industry—a sum, a third in amount of all which he calculates

to obtain from his fresh demand upon the united property and and income of the entire community. The right hon. gentleman thinks the malt-tax a duty which combines all those features that should determine his choice in selecting it. "You can raise it," he says, "without additional expense, and collect it without additional machinery." In this he was followed by the hon. Member for Westbury (Mr Wilson) appending to the broad assumption a supplement of small details. I think the hon. Member for the North Riding of Yorkshire (Mr Cayley), who moved the amendment on this measure, has rather proved the contrary; but, grant that it be so, the reasons alleged are very well for a mere tax-gatherer, or even a Secretary of the Treasury; but there are other reasons—reasons of policy and justice—which should weigh more with a gentleman of such lofty pretensions to the character of a statesman. And I say that all such reasons combine to make this tax one of the very last you should have thought of. The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in proposing this additional malt-tax, spoke only of making the general consumer pay his fair share of the burdens necessary to carry on the war. He spoke only of the general consumer; not one single word did he condescend to say of the effect of the tax upon agriculture. He spoke as if there were no persons in this country engaged in the cultivation of land—he seemed to ignore their existence. But the right hon. gentleman need not have looked deeper than into the familiar pages of Mr M'Culloch—whom he afterwards quotes with deserved respect as high authority — to have known the injury to agriculture which the malt-tax, even without an addition, inevitably inflicts. What says Mr M'Culloch, in his 'Principles of Political Economy?'

"The malt-tax, like other taxes on commodities, falls wholly on the consumer; still, however, it must be admitted that it is, indirectly at least, if not directly, especially injurious to the agriculturist. Barley is a crop that is peculiarly suitable to light lands, and may be introduced with the greatest advantage in an improved rotation after green crops. But it is obvious that by imposing a duty of 20s. 8d. (that is the present duty) per

quarter on malt (the produce into which barley is almost wholly concocted), the demand for the latter is materially diminished, and the farmer is in consequence prevented from sowing barley, where, but for this circumstance, it might be more suitable than any other variety of corn. It is not easy to estimate the injury which this indirect influence of the malt-tax inflicts upon agriculture; but the fact of its inflicting an injury is undeniable. Suppose such a high duty were laid on bread as would lessen the demand for wheat, would any one presume to say that was not especially injurious to agriculturists? or suppose a high duty were laid on calicoes and broadcloths, is it not clear that it would be a serious injury to the manufacturers engaged on it?"

Nay, Mr M'Culloch goes further; for while he thinks, nevertheless, that it may be a tax in case of necessity which you might increase, yet, even as it now exists, he thinks it entitles the farmer to a compensation. And what is the compensation this eminent free-trader insists on? Why, he says—

"The peculiar pressure of the malt-tax upon land gives the agriculturist a peculiar claim—though all claims on account of tithes were abolished—to have a certain fixed duty imposed upon foreign corn. It would be unjust, seeing that the malt-tax, by narrowing the demand for barley, and obliging the farmers to adopt imperfect rotations, is especially inimical to their interests, to expose them, without any corresponding protection, to the competition of foreigners. Perhaps it might require a fixed duty of 1s. 6d. to 2s. a quarter to counteract the unfavourable circumstances alluded to."

That is the malt-tax! So that here, after you have abolished all duties on foreign wheat, you select the very burden which, according to political economy, entitles the grower to some protection, and add to it 50 per cent. The hon. Member for Westbury conceives that an excise duty on malt is very different in effect from an excise duty on soap. He can reduce the duty on soap and yet increase the revenue. On malt, on the other hand, he thinks he can increase the duty without diminishing consumption. But the facts of the past are against

him there. We know that, notwithstanding the increase of wealth and of population, the consumption of malt varied little for 100 years, until the duty on malt was reduced in 1822, when, even before the beer duty was repealed, it rose from more than 26,000,000 bushels in 1821 to more than 30,000,000 bushels in 1828; and since the repeal of the beer duty in 1830 it has risen to more than 40,000,000 bushels. Now I am opposed to all taxes that fall more upon one class of industry than another; but if the stern necessities of war compel you to violate this strict rule, and some class must be partially affected by your burdens, we might regret it less if it were that class who have a paramount interest in bringing the war to a speedy close by vigorous and effective military operations. What is that class? Why, obviously the mercantile and manufacturing—the class engaged in foreign interchange, which war, in proportion as it spreads, must impede and cripple. The produce of land which is consumed at home, not exported, the domestic exchange in retail trade, the profits of professions, are not so vitally interested in the suppression of a distant war as those sublime departments of industry which distance itself the more develops, and which enrich the manufacturer and merchant wherever they can find a friendly shore and an open sea. One might suppose, then, that the Government, if it be unhappily compelled to call upon any class more than another to contribute to the expenses of war, would look naturally to that class to which the restoration of peace is so essentially important. And it would do so in this case the more reasonably, not only because of the comparative wealth of those great members of the corporate state, but because no class during the forty years' peace thus abruptly terminated has been so largely benefited by fiscal reductions. No one can deny that the main spirit and effect of all our reliefs since the Reform Bill, and even before, have been to favour our mercantile and manufacturing interests in preference to any other. It therefore might be supposed, that the class which has most benefited by the reliefs afforded in peace would most willingly co-operate in the means necessary for the termination of war. Yet it is not to this class

the Chancellor of the Exchequer looks for the burdens he resolves to impose. Out of the whole community he selects for a special infliction that special class which has had the hardest struggles, has had the slightest share in the mitigation of taxes, has recently been mulcted of a large portion of its capital for an experiment mainly intended to promote the success of manufactures, and according to frank avowals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, and equally frank avowals by the noble Lord who leads the Government in this House, was entitled to some compensation, if compensation could have been found for them. Now this is the compensation you give them! They asked you a year ago to reduce the malt-tax; your reply is to add to the malt-tax £2,500,000. This is not all; besides money, there is something else which a people must contribute to the dreadful necessities of war. They must contribute their sinews and their blood. The heaviest tax of all is that of human lives. Now, of all classes, which are here spared the most? It is surely the population of great mercantile and manufacturing towns. It is not there that the recruiting sergeant beats for recruits. It is in the agricultural districts, it is in the rural population, that you principally find the soldiers that man your armies; it is there that fathers will most mourn their children. But this is the class to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer goes hand in hand with the recruiting sergeant. The one asks for money, the other for life. In the ordinary laws of conscription for military service, if the man decline service, he is bound to find the money that provides a substitute. But these laws you reverse; you press into the military service the inhabitants of the rural districts, and from the rural districts you take, again, the money that is to find substitutes for the denizens of the manufacturing towns. I cannot conceive a greater injustice than the one you propose in the malt-tax, nor one that—under all circumstances, all the recollections, embittering class against class, connected with the repeal of the corn-laws—will be more gallingly felt, both as an injustice and as an insult, by the agricultural body, upon whom it will mainly fall. It will affect that body in all its

gradations. The hon. gentleman (Mr Cayley) who moved the amendment treated the question in a very able manner; but there were one or two points that he only partially touched upon, with regard to which I will beg leave to make a few observations. Of course the increased price of beer will tend to diminish the demand for barley; but it will do something more than that. Already the high price of bread has diminished the consumption of beer, and has therefore tended in some degree to check the cultivation of barley; and now comes your new tax to discourage altogether the cultivation of the ordinary barley, for your tax falling alike on all qualities of barley, the price of the inferior barleys will sink much below the present proportion to the superior barleys, and there will therefore be a tendency to cultivate none but that of a superior quality. Again, your tax necessitates increase of capital by the maltster, and whatever necessitates increase of capital tends to restrict trade and brings fewer purchasers into the market. There is, however, another and a stronger reason against the selection of a special tax bearing so markedly upon a special class. Upon entering into this war, which, no doubt, does require all our united energies, it certainly would be wise to forbear whatever tends to create or reopen all class grievances and all class contests among ourselves; and this would be the more especially wise with regard to the agricultural class, because you know perfectly well that an angry excitement has long existed in that class in consequence of that change in your commercial policy as to which I will not now argue whether it was right or wrong; and you must remember that the only boon or mode of conciliation proffered to that class was the proposition for the reduction of the malt-tax. Upon the failure of that proposition, a party, supposed to be not very friendly to the landed interest, came into power, and now your attempt to add 50 per cent to this tax, which the friends of the agricultural interest desire to reduce, will be regarded as a fresh blow, as a new humiliation; it will exasperate those feelings which it was desired to extinguish, and, by damping the ardour with which the war should be prosecuted, it is calling in the exciseman to

be the ally of Russia. Farmers, like all other Englishmen, will readily submit to taxes, however onerous, provided you can convince them that they are fair; but I ask you whether any farmer can upon any principle look upon this tax as a fair one? You force on him free trade, by which you concede that he has been a sufferer; you refuse to retract your steps by a single import duty, and when he asks you for free trade for himself to enable him to cultivate that crop which he prefers, you not only refuse his request, but add 50 per cent to the tax upon the only article in which he conceives that free trade would be desirable to him. Why did the Government decline to proceed with the Parliamentary Reform Bill? It was not so much because they could not find time to deal with it on account of being so much occupied with the details of the war—it was not so much because the public mind was distracted from all such considerations by the idea of the war—as it was because the Bill contained provisions affecting agricultural constituencies, which could not be discussed at a popular hustings without reawaking the division of classes, without raising the mischievous cry of "Town and Country." But what you could not effect by your Reform Bill you are resolved to effect by your Budget; for where you proposed to increase the franchises of the great towns, you now propose to exempt them from all partial burdens, and to throw those partial burdens upon the agricultural constituencies, which you proposed by your Reform Bill to enfeeble and deluge with an inundation of urban voters; so that it does seem as if you desired to justify the suspicion that you have some determined hostility against the cultivators of the land. [Mr OSBORNE—"Hear, hear."] Oh! you grant that. The hon. gentleman has the courage to avow what his superiors disguise. You have a determined hostility against the cultivators of the land, and you carry on a party warfare against them, now against their political influence, now against their pecuniary interest. I must say that the whole proceedings connected with this war and with this war Budget do invite one to inquire whether we have really gained so much by that stupendous sacrifice of private inclination which the public

virtue of our Ministers induced them to make when they consented to share among them the disagreeable fatigues of office. Most Governments have been formed by the combination of opinions, but this Government was formed upon the grander principle of the diversity of talent. Great men, long rival and antagonistic statesmen, consented to act together. Lord Aberdeen announced himself as a Liberal Conservative—the noble Lord the Member for London as a Conservative Liberal; but until we saw those great men acting together we should no more have supposed that a Liberal Conservative in one House was the same thing as a Conservative Liberal in the other, than that a horse chestnut was identical with a chestnut horse. But what has this talent done for us? Where and how have these wonderful capacities, this extraordinary experience of public affairs, been displayed? The First Lord of the Admiralty evinces his remarkable sagacity and foresight by entering office with a vehement invective against the Emperor of France, whose flag now sails beside our own. The Ministers who undertake our foreign affairs can only exonerate themselves from the charge of having taken in the Emperor of Russia, by lamentable complaints that they were egregiously taken in themselves. The domestic genius of this incomparable Cabinet is shown in the preparation of a Reform Bill, for which you are compelled, even before war was announced, to own the ungrateful apathy of the people; and your experience in practical affairs is thus evinced by being as blind to the temper of the English public as you were to the designs of the Russian enemy. And now, in that department of finance, on which the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been so severe a critic upon his predecessors, from William Pitt to Lord Monteagle, and from Lord Monteagle to my right hon. friend the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr Disraeli), what have been all your fiscal operations? A series either of fallacious promises or costly blunders. Where was the statesman's prophetic eye when last year the right hon. gentleman based all his calculations upon the removal of the income-tax in seven years; when he would not listen a moment to the possibility

of war? What has become of the cheerful complaisance with which he replied to that inquisitive clerk who complained of his income-tax; and what was at least one-half of the right hon. gentleman's speech the other night composed of? Why, an eloquent vindication of what the world still believes to be mistakes. Now, Sir, I do not pretend to be a competent judge of the right hon. gentleman's financial schemes. But let me put an analogous case, more in my own way. If I were to publish a new book, and I prefixed to it a preface that would occupy three or four mortal columns of the 'Times' newspaper, tending to show that the three books I had last written were not the notable failures which, whether through ignorance or malignity, the public had been led to suspect, sure I am that I could not give a greater triumph to hostile critics, or take a course more likely to make the friendly infer that I had some misgivings on the subject myself. One thing is clear—success never needs an excuse. The right hon. gentleman was pleased to flavour the compliments that he bestowed the other night on Mr Pitt with a sarcastic reproach on the errors of that Minister. I am not Mr Pitt's apologist. Errors he may have committed, no doubt; but of all defects, what is that which the right hon. gentleman selects for his censure? Why, that Mr Pitt did not see the war at a distance; that Mr Pitt was short-sighted. And this charge comes from a gentleman who was the only man out of his own Cabinet who could not foresee the war which he has now to provide for—from a gentleman who converts stocks and can't foresee the results—who has one Budget in March, and another in May,—this is the gentleman who sneers at Mr Pitt as short-sighted! Sir, whether Mr Pitt did or did not commit an error by his system of loans is not that very easy question to decide which the right hon. gentleman presumes it to be on Mr M'Culloch's authority. Mr M'Culloch was no authority for the right hon. gentleman with regard to the malt-tax; but, Sir, whether as a political economist Mr M'Culloch be right or not in censuring Mr Pitt's financial policy in the earlier years of the French war, there are other and grander views than those of political

economy and finance involved in the Government of mankind and the safety of nations. On entering into war with a formidable Power, Mr Pitt may have reasonably supposed that it was not wise to discourage the people by onerous measures of taxation in the first instance. He may have thought, as an Englishman and a patriot, that his first duty was to maintain the spirit of his countrymen, and that posterity would pardon the loans he raised in return for the ample remuneration of interest he secured — remuneration in extended empire, augmented commerce, imperishable honour. And these were our returns when at the close of the war England emerged the first State in that Europe her arms had freed and delivered, and so lightly shook off from her shoulders the burden of these loans you have the ungrateful arrogance to condemn, that every year throughout the peace we have increased in wealth and resources, and since 1831 almost every year has seen some vast diminution of taxes accompany the payment of debt. So much has been said about our not saddling posterity, that it seems as if it were intended to insinuate that this is not a war to be waged on behalf of posterity, but for some fleeting and selfish purpose of our own. If that be so, I call on our Ministers to recall our fleets, and to disband our armies—a war which is not for posterity is no fitting war for us. But surely if ever there was a war waged on behalf of posterity, it is the war which would check the ambition of Russia and preserve Europe from the outlet of barbarian tribes, that require but the haven of the Bosphorus to menace the liberty and the civilisation of races as yet unborn. It is not our generation that need fear if the flag of Russia waved to-morrow over the ruins of Constantinople. The encroachments of Russia are proverbially slow; it would require a quarter of a century before she could recover the exhaustion of her own victories and tame into convenient serfs the brave population she had conquered. It is for all time that we wage the battle. It is that the liberties of our children may be secured from some future Attila, and civilisation guarded from the irruptions of Scythian hordes. On this ground, then, we might fairly demand the next gene-

ration to aid us in the conflict we endure for their sake. Into that question in all its bearings I will not at present enter—it is complicated and difficult: but at least my plain common-sense makes me sure of this, that if you desired to make the people as reluctant to proceed with the war as you were slow and blind to prepare for it, you could not take more effective means than by such speeches as the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered at Manchester; and such taxes—derived, at the very first commencement of military operations, from sources the most direct, palpable, odious in themselves, and unfair in their assessment—as you propose by this Budget to create.

XVI.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 19TH OF DECEMBER 1854.

ON Tuesday, the 19th of December 1854, the President of the Council, Lord John Russell, moved the Second Reading of the Bill for the Enlistment of Foreigners in aid of our troops in the Crimea. An amendment was thereupon moved by the Member for Herts, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, that the Bill should be read a second time on that day six months. An animated discussion ensued, which lasted until early on the following morning, when, a division having been taken, the original motion was carried by 241 votes to 202. In proposing his amendment the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—In rising to oppose the second reading of this Bill, I feel, indeed, that I require more than the ordinary indulgence of the House; for if even upon trivial occasions it would be with great diffidence that I would offer any comment or reply to a speech from the noble Lord, that diffidence must be painfully increased upon an occasion so important, and when the task I have undertaken compels me to rise immediately after so eminent an authority and so consummate a debater. But I trust, at least, that it will not be necessary for me, or for any gentleman on this side of the House, or indeed on either, to declare our readiness to support the Crown in the resolute prosecution of a war in which

the honour of England is pledged to a cause which we believe to be identified with the interests of civilisation itself. But if the honour of England be pledged to this quarrel, I am not willing that other nations and posterity should receive our confession that, at its very onset, our own native spirit, nay, even our own military training, were incompetent to encounter the struggle. The noble Lord has carried us back to former wars, on which he has expatiated with complacency on the aid we derived from the employment of foreign mercenaries. I shall follow him, as I proceed, through the precedents he advances, and I trust to prove that they served less to advance his argument than to divert the House from the question that is really at issue. Meanwhile he cannot deny that in this war, at least, up to the present moment, with inadequate numbers, and at every disadvantage, we have sufficed to fight our own battles and earn our own laurels; and the noble Lord has vouchsafed not one reason to show why we should henceforth prefer to win our victories by proxy. That expression may seem exaggerated, considering the small proportion of foreign force to be employed; but honour is not so intolerable a burden that we should fee foreign soldiers to ease ourselves of the slightest portion of that load. My objections to this Bill are very broad but very few, and I shall endeavour to state them in as few words as possible. What is it on which you now mainly rely to continue this war with vigour, no matter at what sacrifice and cost? Not so much on the extent of our territory, the amount of our population, the wealth of our resources, as on the ardour of the people; on that spirit of nationality which, we are told by the Minister of War, rises against every danger, and augments in proportion to the demand on its energies. It is that ardour you are about to damp—it is that spirit of nationality to which this Bill administers both discouragement and affront. The noble Lord says our difficulty is at the commencement. What is the commencement? One burst of popular enthusiasm! And in the midst of that enthusiasm, at a time when we are told by the Secretary at War that you get recruits faster than you can form them into regiments—you say to the people of this empire, "Your rude and

untutored valour does not suffice for the prowess of England, and we must apply to the petty principalities of Europe for the co-operation of their more skilful and warlike subjects." I say that this is an unwise and, I maintain it to be, an unnecessary blow upon the vital principle that now sustains your cause, and brings to your army more men than you know how to employ. And if anything could make this war unpopular, it would be the sight of foreign soldiers quartered and drilled in any part of these kingdoms, paid by the taxes extorted from this people, and occupying barracks of which the paucity is your excuse for not having embodied more of the militia of our native land. Do you mean to say it will not make a difference in the temper of the middle and working classes, now nobly prepared for any pecuniary sacrifice, whether they pay the cost of an army of their own countrymen, who repay them by deeds which make us more proud of the English name, or whether they are to pay foreigners, who may be equally brave, may perform equal service, but whose glory will only compliment our wealth at the expense of our manhood—only prove that we were rich enough to consign to foreign hirelings that standard which a handful of English soldiers had planted on the heights of Alma, and rescued from barbarian numbers on the plains of Inkerman? What, Sir, is the reason assigned for this Bill besides that learned array of historical precedents to which I shall come afterwards—that, whatever the ardour of our people, it requires time to drill them, to convert raw recruits into disciplined soldiers? Sir, there is some force in that argument, but it confers a grave censure on the Government; it proves all that has been said of their want of activity and foresight, that during the eighteen months in which war—this great, this "protracted war"—was foreseen by all England, except its chief Minister,—that, during the nine months or so in which we have been actually engaged in hostilities, the Government should not already have raised and drilled a sufficient number of reserve to dispense at least with this first instalment of 10,000 foreigners. Why, if you will compute the time elapsed even since the battle of the Alma—the time devoted in preparing this thoughtful and delib-

erate Bill — in corresponding with foreign princes (if the Bill pass), in enlisting your foreign soldiers, bringing them hither, and then, it seems, fitting them for service,—if you would compute all this time, from first to last, employed in getting together these foreign troops, you would have leisure to drill and send out double the number of your own countrymen. I ask you this question—I press for a reply—you say you require these foreign soldiers for an immediate emergency—that you want them to send out in the interval which you employ in drilling English recruits; that is your main argument: tell me then, plainly, in how short a time do you calculate that they will be raised, imported, organised, despatched to the Crimea? You are bound to show that it will be within a shorter time than you can raise, drill, and send out an equal number of native troops. Can you show this? I might defy you to do it; but until you have shown it, your argument has no ground on which to stand. But it seems to me strange that these practised warriors—so superior to ourselves in all military craft and discipline — are first to be imported to England, and finish their martial education upon English ground. As it has been pertinently said elsewhere, "this is not the shortest road to the Crimea" — you can send these troops from the Continent without coming to Parliament at all; why, then, not send them at once to the Crimea from whatever place abroad you collect them? Make your depot anywhere you please out of the British dominions. There is this advantage in that course—you have reasons of your own to draw these mercenaries from quarters which you do not think it discreet to state openly to Parliament. Well, then, you should have sufficient confidence in those reasons to act entirely on your own official responsibility; thus you will neither openly exhibit to the public that spectacle of foreign hirelings within these realms, all ways so intolerable to the national feelings, nor call upon the House of Commons to sanction, for reasons not plainly before it, a degradation to the spirit of the people we represent. Sir, now look to the extraordinary want of consideration, and, I must say, to the slovenly haste with which the provisions of this Bill are devised and matured. Its first introduction led at once to the

alarm that these foreigners were intended to supply the place of the native defenders, not only of English honour abroad, but of English security at home; that, in short, they should supply the place of the militia and the British forces removed from this country. That supposition was indignantly denied. In spite of such denial, the Minister charged with the conduct of the Bill finds the public persist in that alarm, for he says that "he hears with surprise from several quarters that such an impression unquestionably prevails out of doors;" and then he condescends to look into the Bill itself, and is bound to confess that, by the wording of it, it might be perverted to such a purpose. What! in a Bill embracing such delicate questions, so nearly touching the keystone of all free institutions, surely the wording ought to have been so deliberately concocted that it should not harbour a phrase which a people jealous of freedom could misinterpret, and which some future Ministers, of more dangerous character than these, might distort into a precedent that would jeopardise the liberties of the country or risk the security of the throne. And then, even as to the number of men required, so little calculation was made—although the noble Lord tells us that this is a main reason why we are now summoned, and we might presume that your calculations would be somewhat carefully prepared—that it is an object of indifference whether it be 15,000 or 10,000, and the latter number is at once exchanged for the former. How, then, can you blame us if we presume to doubt your prudence, your deliberate foresight, your practical ability to conduct this war, when, even in this Bill which you have had such leisure to prepare, we see all this blundering in the terms that involve a momentous constitutional principle, and all this careless indecision as to the amount of the force you require? And still more may we doubt your prudence, when, for the sake of so miserable a succour as 10,000 foreign bayonets, or rather for the object of landing and drilling them within these dominions, you, who tell us of the advantage of unanimity, resolve to force on a measure which you were blind indeed if you did not foresee would be unpopular out of doors—which at once necessitates the strongest opposition—which you carried by a petty majority through one House of

Parliament — and which, if you carry it through the other, will be such a thorn in your side that I venture to doubt whether you will ever have the courage to use the power you now ask at your hands. Nay, Sir, so little had the Minister who introduced elsewhere the measure even examined the constitutional principles which it involves, that he prefaced the Bill by observing that the power to enlist and introduce into this country foreign soldiers, without application to Parliament, was formerly considered to be vested in the Crown. I am sure that the Lord President of the Council would warmly deny that our great constitutional authorities have admitted that this was ever, at any period of our history, the acknowledged prerogative of the sovereigns of this country. We all know that William III. sent a message to this House, requesting, somewhat in humble terms, that his Dutch troops should be allowed to remain, and that the House of Commons refused the request. You may say, that was in time of peace; but I know that Lord Camden held the doctrine that, neither in peace nor in war, could foreign troops be admitted into this country without the sanction of an Act of Parliament. I know that Mr Fox declared that, if the Crown ever did possess such a power, we had a constitution in words and not in reality. I can well conceive the indignation with which the Whigs of the last age, who are authorities so high with the Lord President of the Council, would have heard, if now living, such a doctrine, such a remark, emanating from a Minister of War who sits in the same Cabinet with the leader of the Whigs. Sir, I could not pass over that rash assertion of a great officer of the Crown on a point essential to the vindication of the freedom of our ancestors and the principles of our ancient constitution. But your Bill is amended — the more obnoxious clause is removed; I grant now that all constitutional forms are complied with; I find no fault with you there. But I say that, while adhering to all constitutional forms, you ought not to tamper with something so hostile to the constitutional spirit as the introduction of foreign troops, unless you can establish the closest precedent in parallel cases, or make out a plea of paramount and urgent necessity. Now, first, as to the precedents cited by the

noble Lord. I am almost ashamed to repeat what every one knows — namely, that the precedent you would draw from the enlistment of Germans in 1804 and 1806 is wholly inapplicable to the present case. Look to the period of the great French war. Our sovereign was not only King of Great Britain — he was Elector of Hanover. His interests and ours were identified with the German Powers, except, indeed, Prussia, which at that time, influenced first by her guilty designs on the partition of Poland, and afterwards by the hope of obtaining Hanover as a reward for neutrality, did, in the opinion of all dispassionate historians, by her selfish inertness and procrastination, paralyse the arms of the other allies, and give to the common foe that gigantic power of which Prussia was afterwards the most signal victim. I trust that Prussia is wiser now; that she will not again amuse other and nobler confederacies by her tortuous diplomacy, cripple their energies by dissimulating lethargy, nor require, at the last, the assistance of their arms to free herself from the ruin in which selfish indifference to the common cause once involved her very existence as a nation. But at that time the enlistment of German soldiers in this country was at least natural enough, though even the memory of their gallantry in the field, which deserves all we can say of it, has not, you see, sufficed to render that enlistment popular. The noble Lord refers to the debate of 1804, in which Mr Francis, afterwards Sir Philip, took part. Ay, but he did not tell you the excuse which the then Secretary at War made to the objections Mr Francis indignantly urged. The excuse was this: "The enlistment of German soldiers was only a measure of providing for a certain number of men who were subjects of the same sovereign, and had been forced to leave their country." Who can say that this is a parallel instance? It is true that other foreigners were enlisted, but they were chiefly from those German nations which had the most cordial sympathy with the English cause. But now, indeed, although we should be proud to have a sincere and hearty alliance with the German courts, it is at least premature to believe that their interests, their objects in the war, are cordially and permanently identified with our own. And if we would render the Germans as popular

in England as I hope they may yet be, we could not more defeat that object than by exhibiting German soldiers as substitutes for English valour upon English ground. But the noble Lord goes back to the time of Marlborough—nay, he says that in all our former wars foreign troops have been employed. Yes; but when they were employed with honour, they were the auxiliary forces of our open allies, and officered by the rank, the chivalry, the military renown of nations in the closest sympathy with ourselves, and were not mere free lances, under unknown and mercenary captains. I say, when they have been employed with honour. For where, indeed, an aid similar to that which you now demand has been obtained—wherever foreign princes have been subsidised, and their subjects hired by English gold to take part in the struggles with which they had no English sympathies—there the historian pauses to vent his scorn on the princes who thus sell the blood of their subjects, and his grief at the degradation of England in the blood-money she pays to the hirelings: these are not precedents to follow, but examples to shun. The noble Lord reads to us the speech of the Duke of Wellington, and, by a most ingenious perversion of logic, wishes us to believe that, when the Duke said only one-third of our army was British, the rest were mercenaries, like those whom your Bill would enlist. Why, Sir, they were the Spanish and Portuguese, fighting in defence of their native soil. Who rejects the assistance of worthy allies? who maintains that England should fight for the world single-handed? Can the noble Lord not comprehend the distinction involved? Here, armies of various states combine in a course dear to all. There, one state contributes to the general standard, not its own native valour and zeal, but a mercenary band, whose valour gives it no glory, whose zeal has no motive but pay. This is what I meant when I said "Honour was not so intolerable a burden that we should fee foreign soldiers to ease ourselves of its load." We are proud to share honour with the Frenchman, with the Turk, with any people that co-operate in our cause and participate our feelings. That is to share honour with others. Here you ask us to sell a part of that honour which were otherwise our share. The noble Lord has

stated the advantages conferred on our own army by the German troops in the French war. I grant them fully. I have heard great military authorities say that the German cavalry—especially under the command of the consummate officers it then possessed, such as Arranschild and Victor Alten—taught us how to charge and when to pull up. But the times are changed. Surely since then we have learned all that they could teach us. How could German officers improve the charge of the Greys and Enniskillens at Balaklava, or that wondrous and steadfast gallantry of the Light Brigade, which brought 200 out of 600 men from the midst of the Russian cavalry, and squares of infantry supported by cross batteries of twenty pieces of cannon? Sir, we have learned more from the Germans than instruction in the art of war. We have been indebted to them for noble lessons in the arts of peace. Every cultivator of literature and science must cherish a deep and grateful affection for the German people, and a warm hope in their ultimate coalition with ourselves. Of this initiatory treaty with Austria I will say nothing at present; but if it does lead to an earnest and binding alliance, no man but must welcome a Power which can bring to the common cause from 300,000 to 500,000 men, and which—always assuming it to be sincere — would be our most convenient and our strongest guarantee for the maintenance of those territorial conditions on which any future peace must be based. I should rejoice yet more to learn that Prussia adopts the example of Austria — an example alleged, but still prospective — and contrasts, by her future sincerity, the guileful policy her Court espoused at the commencement of the French war. Between ourselves and the German people, of which Prussia is one of the great representatives, there is so kindred a community of race, of commercial interests, of all that belongs to intellectual interchange, that it would seem to me something monstrous, something out of the course of nature, if Prussia, the great centre of Germanic intelligence — Prussia, with that glorious capital of Berlin, in which philosophy and science have ripened every thought that could most ridicule and abhor the fanatic pretences with which a mock crusader would mask usurpation — that

Prussia should sink from the rank among civilised States to which she was raised by the genius of Frederick the Great, and affect to have no vital interest in a war that would roll back from the borders of Europe the tide of a Tartar inundation. The supposition is preposterous! And I will not yet believe that a people which boasts universal education could be induced by any king, however able or beloved, to desert the ramparts which now protect from Attilas and Timours the destinies of the human race. But if we are to bring about a cordial friendship with the families of the German people, in heaven's name let it be in a mode worthy of them and us. Let us have nations openly for our allies, and not this contraband levy from the surplus forces of their petty princes. Sir, indeed no one has yet told us where these troops are to come from, and, what is still more important, where, after all, these foreign soldiers have really learned anything more than the holiday part of war — where have been the recent campaigns and wars in which they have exhibited their prowess and acquired their military experience. To hear what is said of the superior merits and seasoned hardihood of these foreigners, one might suppose they were the identical 10,000 who accomplished the retreat of Xenophon, instead of being merely, I suppose, men who have gone through the formal routine of the Landwehr, and seen no more of actual service, nor encountered any greater trial to the nerves, than the stout labourers you enlist in Kilkenny or Yorkshire. But are you sure you will get even trained soldiers—even the men who have gone through the drill of the Landwehr? I doubt it. From all I hear of the composition of that body I suspect you will obtain only raw recruits—recruits as raw as you can raise in England at less cost and in a shorter time. But it has been sought to gain some sort of popular favour to this measure—sought not, indeed, by Ministers, for they will not condescend to court popularity, but by their friends out of doors — by implying that the furtive and ulterior object of the Bill is to enlist men who are actuated by a nobler motive than that of ordinary soldiers, and first among all unfortunate refugees, the exiled Poles. But this idea has been so completely scouted by the First Minister of the

Crown — it has been so expressly declared that the consent of foreign sovereigns for the enlistment of their subjects is to be obtained—that I shall not waste the time of the House in arguing that supposition. I know not, indeed, what sovereigns now sharing among them the ancient kingdom of Poland you could apply to for permission to form Polish recruits into separate battalions, with all the hopes that Polish recruits would entertain. But on this point I would only say, that if in spite of the present intention of Ministers—seeing that their intentions are more liable to change than those of ordinary mortals—if you do hereafter establish a legion of Polish or other refugees, at least beforehand make up your mind what are to be the definite objects of the war. If, indeed, among those objects, as the war proceeds, you do see your way to the restitution of Poland among the free States of Europe, say so manfully, and there are few Englishmen who would not rejoice at the possibility of such a barrier to Russian encroachment, and such a reparation to the fraud and violence of a former age. Then, indeed, Poles would be more than our soldiers—they would become our allies, and they would be as welcome to our country as they would be to our brothers in the field. But, if you have no idea of such an enterprise, or if you would indolently trust the resuscitation of Poland in the pages of European history to that chapter in human fate with which you appear most familiar—the chapter of accidents—then I say, beware how you wilfully lend yourselves to false hopes, or incur the stain of insincerity with all whom you invite to your standard, not for the sake of pay, but from the expectation of freedom. It would be in vain to say you did not deliberately sanction such hopes; that the Poles must silence their beating hearts, and be but the unreasoning machines of your military drill. That idea is against the first law of human nature. Every Pole whom you form into regiments would say that you had led him to unavailing slaughter, unless you had made it one object of your war to plant your standard on the citadel of Warsaw. And, do let the House remember that the number of these foreign soldiers, from first to last, is unlimited. It is the peculiarity of this Bill, that while for the commencement of the war, in

which you say they are alone required, the force is most paltry and inadequate, yet hereafter, when you say they will not be wanted, the number swells and increases, and is altogether undefined; it is 10,000 men at a time; but the Bill establishes a perpetual depot of reserve, and as soon as one set are despatched to the field, another may be prepared here to succeed them; so that we can form no conceivable guess as to the number you will employ and ultimately disband. Suppose, then, hereafter, you do form Polish battalions—and peace comes, and the Poles have still no country; what is to become of the large bands of armed malcontents you will leave on the surface of Europe, and who cannot quietly melt, like your own soldiers, into the ranks of peaceful citizens? Whatever you do, then, I implore you, for the sake of justice to Poland—for the honour of English sincerity and plain-dealing—and for the cause of social order throughout Europe—to decide before you may enlist battalions of exiled patriots, how far you will venture to extend the definite objects of this war. Sir, it may be quite competent to hon. gentlemen to extend the discussion of this Bill, which is one cause that now brings us together, into a survey of the general conduct of the war, of which you call this an essential measure. I have no such intention—I do not desire to reiterate former charges, nor set into adroit display every casual inexperience or omission; on the contrary. I heard with pleasure the eloquent speech the other night of the Secretary at War—a pleasure, not only at his eloquence, but caused by a feeling more worthy of him and me, because he seemed to me satisfactorily to dispose of many charges connected with his own department, not, indeed, made in this House, but which had excited a painful impression out of doors. I cheerfully recognise in the Cabinet many who have won those high names in the service of their country which give them the noblest stake in its honour and its welfare; nor is there, indeed, one in the Cabinet—I might say in all the Government—of whom I would speak in other terms than those of personal respect. But still, it is not always a motley, and, possibly, sometimes a discordant, combination of able and worthy men which suffices to constitute an able and worthy Cabinet, even in times

of peace; and for the fitting and spirited conduct of war it does require a promptitude, a decision, a rapid and comprehensive foresight, which can only come from a unity of purpose and of object; and that unity the conflicting speeches of Ministers have already notoriously belied. Take but a single instance—take the last: compare the sanguine terms in which the treaty with Austria is paraded by one Minister elsewhere, with the cautious scepticism as to its actual value, "its important results," which has been expressed by the organ of the Government in this House. And here I must make one observation in connection both with all that this treaty may lead to, and also with the conduct of the war. It has been assumed, on a recent occasion, by the First Minister of the Crown, that Government was blamed for its reluctance to go to war, as exhibited in preliminary negotiations. This is not strictly the fact. What we presume to regret, if not to blame, is that, in those preliminary negotiations, the sentiment of the people, which so deeply resented the first disguised aggression on Turkish independence, was never fairly represented to the Russian Emperor; and that, if the language held by our Ministers at the first, without being at all more threatening, had been more frank and plain-spoken, you would have had a better chance of preserving peace than you could have by complimenting the Russian Czar on his moderation and sincerity, after he had openly proposed the subdivision of the Turkish dominions, and after he had deceived your credulity by representing large military preparations as an innocent mode of moral coercion. It may be well to remember this, should a treaty with Austria lead to new overtures for peace. If so, Government are sure of success. They have only carefully to remember the spirit with which they conducted former negotiations, and to conduct the future in a spirit diametrically the reverse. It is not true that we blame the Ministers for not going to war till all parties were prepared to support it; but what we regret, if we dare not blame, is, that the only persons unprepared for the war are the very Ministers charged with its conduct; and so unprepared were they, that the best excuse for all deficiencies is, that they engaged in an indefinite war against a formidable enemy, with

military preparations so little raised above the ordinary establishments of peace, and on the niggard hypothesis that its cost could be defrayed out of our annual income. And now, when the public are perhaps indulgently disposed to receive your tardy assumption of energy, braced up at the last moment, at the commencement of winter, as a partial indemnity for your, at least, comparative indolence during the precious months of summer and autumn—who could foresee that one of the gigantic efforts of your collective patriotism, reserved as a surprise, so pleasing and prodigious, that although we are now told by the noble Lord it is the main reason why we meet, it is not even alluded to in the Speech from the Throne,—who could foresee that this gigantic effort—this grand surprise—was to be this begging petition to petty potentates for 10,000 soldiers? What! has it come to this? In an empire on which we are told that the sun never sets, the national Council is hastily summoned to prepare and parade all its military power. One Minister tells us his recruits are more than he can manage; another says he could bring a million soldiers in the field—some day or other; and then, when all the world is breathless to know what you are about to bring forth, *nascetur ridiculus mus*—out creeps this proposal to borrow or crimp from the foreigner 10,000 troops to be drilled in these realms. This grand profession of redundant strength, and this curious confession of absolute want, remind me of the adventurer, who boasted to an acquaintance he picked up at a coffee-house of the immense wealth he possessed at a distance—his castles in the north, and his lands in the west, and his shares in the copper-mines of Cornwall and the gold-mines of Peru,—and when he had worked up his listener to the highest point of prospective gratitude as to what he might expect from the munificence of a friend of such boundless resources, suddenly clapped his hand to his pocket and said, "By the by, I have a little bill to pay at the bar; you don't happen to have such a thing as tenpence-halfpenny about you?" Whatever way I look at this proposed Bill I can see nothing to justify and excuse it. I have said that there is no parallel case of precedent. Now, let us ask, what is your plea of necessity? And here, Sir,

I find my own opinions so lucidly and moderately stated by a great man whose authority must have the utmost weight with gentlemen opposite, that I will read what was said in this House by the late Lord Grey, then Mr Grey. He said—"On urgent occasions it may be proper to introduce foreign troops into this country, but it should never be done except in cases of extreme and proved necessity, and never should be suffered to be done without being watched with that constitutional jealousy which is the best part of the character of this House, and the best security for the rights and liberties of the people." Now, let me pause, and appeal to the generous candour of hon. gentlemen opposite, if these words from one of the greatest statesmen who ever adorned your opinions, do not justify the jealousy with which we regard this Bill, and whether we are right or wrong in that jealousy, if they do not amply vindicate us from the unworthy charge of wishing to obstruct the general preparations for the war, because we cavil at the introduction of foreign soldiers. Mr Grey went on to observe that—"Though he was not ready to deny that for the purpose of our own defence we should sometimes employ foreign troops, yet he could not help thinking that the wisest course for us would be to rely on what had been emphatically called the energy of an armed nation." So, then, where is this case of urgent and proved necessity—necessity for our own defence? You have not argued it as a necessity; the noble Lord has not done so: he is too much of an Englishman for that. It is only argued at most as a question of convenience—the convenience of drilling or organising the troops in this country; and I say that it does not seem to me a convenience that is worth the purchase. Sir, it was not unreasonably asked elsewhere, "How will this proposition be regarded by the enemy?" What a pretext do you give to the Emperor of Russia to represent to his subjects the correctness of his estimate of the shopkeeping spirit of Great Britain! "Compare," he will say, "their braggart talk in their Houses of Parliament, their boast of the popular enthusiasm, their willingness to contribute their best blood to the cause for which they fight, with the simple fact that before the first year is out they are

compelled to apply to the fifth-rate Powers of Europe for 10,000 foreign soldiers, on the pretence—nay, on the confession—that they are not a military nation; that they have not had time since this war began to drill a sufficient number of recruits for an army which, at the battle of Inkerman, could only bring 8000 men fit for service into the field." I do not desire to stand thus either before the enemy or before our allies, and I say that this is not the best mode to remove the hesitation of Austria and Prussia. I am convinced that we have men of our own, even at this moment, in spite of all previous delays, prepared to fight our own battle. You tell us you have already sent large reinforcements to the Crimea. You sent them weeks and months ago. Of course, ever since you have been raising and drilling more. You have had ample leisure. You have leisure still to drill into active service the recruits you obtain from a population so brave, so robust, and so proverbially quick of comprehension as that of Great Britain and Ireland. I deny altogether that the drafts you will take from our labouring population will derange the channels of agricultural or other industry. We have plenty to spare from a population of nearly thirty millions. The suspension of many industrial occupations on railways and elsewhere, caused by the war, releases a large number of the stoutest portion of our labourers. You may find employment in the army for many more of the marines now idle at a distance; you may make use of the native forces in India; above all, you have only to rely on our militia—to give fair play to that magnificent nursery of soldiers. I do not presume to offer you advice in details—I say only, go into the market of war with the best spirit of trade. Your best and nearest market is at home. Get there the best article you can—it is the cheapest in the long-run. I remember that in 1779, when the ports of France and Spain bristled with hostile ships, when American privateers were seen with impunity in the Channel, that Lord Harcourt offered to Ireland 4000 foreign troops in lieu of a greater number sent to America. What was the answer of the Irish Parliament? Sir, they rejected the proposal; they declared "that they were competent to defend themselves, or that

they were not worth defending." That noble answer which became the representatives of Ireland may equally become the united Parliament of the three kingdoms; and what was the practical result of that refusal? Why, the result of refusing 4000 foreign soldiers was, that 50,000 volunteers immediately presented themselves. Talk of our men being raw recruits: why, how many of those who dashed through the Russian armaments, who braved with equal fortitude unparalleled sufferings, of disease, of climate, of a defective commissariat, were the new recruits you affect to depreciate? That material which a British army has so successfully tested is the material on which a British Parliament may be content to rely. Those labourers and sons of labourers whom the leader of this House eulogised in terms of such just and such noble eloquence; those men—those raw recruits, equally daring in the charge, and calm as veterans under the attack; those men, so patient in their sufferings and so humane to the foe;—those are the material for your army. You have tried it—keep to it. Without disparagement to the soldiers you may collect from Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, anywhere abroad, I say we have proved sufficiently that this is not the moment in which we need tax our countrymen in order to arm the foreigner for our defence. Do you ask me what proof? Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman! I say that any deficiencies in the mere mechanism of the drill are quickly got over with officers so skilful as ours; I say that even the raw recruits, before they have joined your standard, have already gone through a more precious discipline than three years of lifeless ceremonials can give to the soldiers of a despotic conscription. They have gone, from their cradles, through the discipline of hardy habits, of patient endurance, of indomitable conviction in the strength of their own right arms—that is the discipline with which armies soon learn to be invincible, and without which men may be faultless in the drill, but valueless in the field. Sir, with these views, and trusting they may not be altogether distasteful to the patriotism of the House, I move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

XVII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 29TH OF JANUARY 1855.

ON Friday, the 26th of January 1855, the Member for Sheffield, Mr John Arthur Roebuck, moved in the House of Commons "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those Departments of our Government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that army."

Thereupon a discussion arose which lasted for two nights, at the close of it the motion being carried against the Government by 305 votes to 148. During the second night of the Debate the following Speech was delivered.

SIR,—I shall dismiss very briefly that part of this discussion which refers to the abstract propriety of appointing the Select Committee of Inquiry moved for by the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield.* I shall leave the Government to direct their answer upon that point not so much to us as to their late colleague, who resigned office rather than resist that inquiry, and who, I conclude, would vote for it but for the natural delicacy of his position towards the Cabinet he so lately adorned. The right hon. gentleman the Secretary at War and the right hon. baronet the Secretary for the Colonies, have dwelt on the

* Mr Roebuck.

danger of establishing such a precedent as the appointment of this Committee might furnish. They may dismiss that apprehension, for nothing but the extremity of the case can justify this motion; and I trust, for the honour of the country and the sake of humanity, that a case so extreme may never occur again. If it does not, the motion will be no precedent; if it does, a similar motion will be understood to bear the same interpretation that the common-sense of the House puts upon this: for I agree with Ministers that they cannot grant this Committee without a virtual transfer of the power and responsibilities of the Queen's Government, and the question, therefore, simply is —Has the conduct of her Majesty's Ministers in this war been such that this House should quietly acquiesce, not only in the continuance of their power, but in the mode by which their responsibilities have been discharged? I, for one, feel that such an acquiescence would be to make us the servile accomplices in the sacrifice of what remains of that noble army of whose deeds the country are so proud, and of whose sufferings, so touchingly described by the hon. Member for North Northamptonshire,* the Government should be so ashamed. The noble Lord the Member for London has refused to make himself that accomplice, although the pain of deserting his colleagues in the hour of their imminent need must have been almost intolerable to so gallant a spirit, and I give him the more credit for the pain on account of the Spartan fortitude with which he has concealed its pangs. Shall this House be more complaisant than the noble Lord, although it has not the countervailing scruples which must have weighed upon a Cabinet Minister, the late organ and leader of the Government in these walls, now standing alone in his abandonment of office? If we could not feel for the public calamities, we must still be roused by our own private anxiety and sorrow. I myself have two near relations in this war; many of us have near relations among the sufferers. It is our boast, as a portion of the gentlemen of England, that wherever danger is to be braved or honour is to be won, there some of our kindred blood is flowing or may flow; and after the miseries so

* Mr Stafford.

simply told by the hon. Member for North Northamptonshire, shall we be deprived of a remedy for the evils you admit, of an inquiry into the abuses you deplore, because of some paltry technical objections to the words of the only motion that promises relief—because it is a vote for inquiry, when the Government assert that it should be a vote of censure? Take it, then, as a vote of censure, and let it so stand as a precedent to other times, if other times should be as grievously afflicted under a similar Administration. I shall not enter into all the details on which the Secretary at War always tries to rest the case of the Government, partly because I have been here anticipated by those who so ably preceded me, partly because I wish to lay clearly before the House the broad principles of the charge which we make against the Ministers. And first, we accuse you of this: That you entered—not, indeed, hastily, but with long deliberation, with ample time for forethought, if not for preparation—into the most arduous enterprise this generation has witnessed, in the most utter ignorance of the power and resources of the enemy you were to encounter, the nature of the climate you were to brave, of the country you were to enter, of the supplies which your army would need. This ignorance is the more inexcusable because you disdain the available sources of information. This is the fundamental cause of our disaster, and not the comparatively petty and collateral causes to which the Secretary at War would assign them. The ignorance, indeed, on a former occasion, the Government confessed; and when we were convened on the 12th of December, we heard that synod of veteran statesmen—those *analecta majora* of the wisdom and genius of Parliament—actually make their ignorance the excuse for their incapacity. We might accept that excuse for the sake of its candour; but the Government have asked more—for, as I will undertake to show, they have asked us to acquit them of disasters when they took no pains to acquire the information that was necessary for success. It has, indeed, been said that the public were no wiser than the Government—that the public underrated the power of Russia, and demanded the premature siege of Sebastopol. If this were true, what then? Why do

we choose Ministers—why do we give them salaries, patronage, honours—if it is not to have some men wiser than the average of mankind, at least in all that relates to the offices they hold? It may be a noble fault in a people to disregard the strength of an enemy when a cause is just. Who does not love and admire this English people more when they rose as one man to cry, "No matter what the cost or hazard—let us defend the weak against the strong"? But if to underrate the power of an enemy was almost a merit in the people, it was a grave dereliction of duty in a Minister of War. But I deny that the public, fairly considered, were not wiser than the Government; and there is scarcely a point which you have covered with a blunder on which some one or other of the public did not try to prepare and warn you. I shall first notice a subject hitherto little touched on in this House, but which seems to me intimately connected with the condition of our troops in the Crimea. The war had begun; our fleets were on the seas—the noblest fleets that ever left these shores—and it was on those fleets, much more than our land force, that the public relied for any advantage over Russia. Well, the ships were on the sea, and Odessa lay before them, surprised and almost defenceless—Odessa, the great depot of the Russian enemy, the depot of ammunition, provisions, troops for that Crimea which you had already resolved to invade—and you content yourselves with the holiday bombardment of a single fort. And we may judge of your private instructions to your naval commanders, when for the audacity of that notable achievement your Admiral almost makes an apology. Is Odessa, I ask, spared for the sake of humanity? Humanity! Why, you were told that Odessa was the feeder of Sebastopol. You have found it to be so to your cost. The Secretary at War expressed his amazement at the celerity with which Russian troops were moved from Odessa to Sebastopol, and to spare the arsenals, the granary, the market, the nursery-ground of a hostile fortress, was the grossest inhumanity to the army that now rots before the walls which your own *laches* has manned and supplied against it. If you were influenced by care for the British trade connected with Odessa, you

knew little indeed of your countrymen, if you did not feel that you might have come to Parliament with confidence for the most liberal compensation to all British subjects whom the occupation of Odessa—there was no occasion to destroy it—might have injured. This first proof of feeble incapacity links itself with all that has followed. You thus forbear the easiest and the wealthiest conquest of all, in order afterwards, in the very worst time, at the very worst season, to attempt an achievement the most difficult in itself, and which that forbearance to Odessa rendered more difficult still. Why, Sir, how the whole fortunes of the campaign would have changed if Odessa had been your depot instead of the Russian—nay, if when you found you could not invade the Crimea before the end of September, you had postponed that expedition till the spring, and instead of sending your troops to moulder piecemeal, ragged and roofless before Sebastopol. But if you had some reason which we cannot divine for not prosecuting the attack at that time, why did you not later effectively blockade Odessa and the Sea of Azoff? You have thirty ships of the line, forty steamers on the Euxine, and you do not so much as blockade the great magazine of the enemy! Well, your troops went to Gallipoli. I must here contradict the statements both of the Minister and of the Secretary at War. I will show you even there, at the first, how utterly you had failed in the simplest provisions of which the Secretary of War has so vainly boasted. I have here some short extracts from the letters of an officer written to his father, not intended for publication. I read them because I can, if necessary, state his name to any member of the Government, without, alas! the fear of injuring him in his profession. He is now no more. His father came to me and said, through his tears, "I would proudly have given my son's life to the service of his country, but he was murdered by the neglect of the Government, and without any real aid to his country." This young man had just bought a step in his profession; he was full of life, health, and ardour; athletic in his habits, no raw recruit, but accustomed to military hardship, the last man in the whole army to murmur without a cause. He belonged to that band of heroes famous even in the

ranks of English warfare—the Welsh Fusiliers. His first letter is from Gallipoli, April 23. Here let me observe, that on the 7th of April the Duke of Newcastle had declared that never was an army so well provided for—in food, in all necessaries, even in articles that might be considered luxuries. On the 23d of April an officer at Gallipoli writes thus: "There are 20,000 French troops encamped a short distance from our troops. They are in every respect better equipped and provided for than ours. Their Government have provided their officers with mules for the conveyance of their baggage and everything else they require. We have to buy mules for ourselves, which cannot be done at Gallipoli, as the French Government have already bought them all up."

Why was this? If the French could find mules, even at Gallipoli, why were you less active than the French? "The French soldiers fraternise freely with ours, and to-day we saw them giving ours some of their bread, of which they have a most bountiful supply, while ours have not enough." At Gallipoli, in April, at the opening of the campaign, the soldiers of the Queen of England eating the bread of our ally! Is that a position which is worthy her throne, or our pride as a nation, and how does this agree with the Duke of Newcastle's statement of the 7th of April? Now let us pass from Gallipoli. You proceed to Varna, not to fight, not to assist the Turks at Silistria—you have not, indeed, the necessary transports for that—but because Omar Patha says that the presence there of your army will have a moral effect upon the Russians. Now, Sir, I think that this was a request on the part of Turkey which, so far as the selection of a site to encamp, we had a right to refuse. We came to defend them and to fight, but not to remain stationary, and melt away by pestilence in a climate notoriously pestilential in that special time of the year—pestilential, not from an accidental cause, but from one periodical and invariable—and which, if your Minister had asked any traveller, or consulted any authority, he must have known. Well, Sir, from the camp there, this officer writes, July 28: "I hope something will be done soon, as I should look forward with horror to another sum-

mer in this country. We have now considerable difficulty in getting supplies, and frequently have to live on bread-and-cheese for a day or two, as ration meat cannot be eaten, though the officers eat it when the men will not."

Now comes the reason why that climate was pestilential, and why you ought to have known it: "July and August," says the officer there encamped, "are unhealthy months, as they are all dry and very hot, and the deposits from the lakes, which overflow in the spring, dry up and create miasma. Nearly all our cases of cholera occur in the night, and are mostly fatal in six hours."

This young man has the cholera himself—he partially recovers—he rouses when the report comes that something is to be done—something, no doubt, which it was necessary to do; but was it the impression that that something should be the siege of Sebastopol? Then hear what he says:—"Of course they keep secret where we are going; but we believe that it is to take Odessa, which is full of corn granaries, &c. I think this is the best thing we could do, and winter there both army and navy. It is too late in the year to attack Sebastopol."

That could not have been the solitary notion of that young soldier; it must have been the talk of his comrades—"too late in the year to attack Sebastopol!" But no, out of all the twelve months in the year you had taken the worst to encamp at Varna, and it was of course equally consistent to take the worst to besiege Sebastopol, that Gibraltar of the East. You take the worst time not only for military operations, but for sanitary conditions. Open even so common a work as M'Culloch's 'Geographical Dictionary,' and you will find it was the unhealthiness of the Crimea which frustrated its colonisation by Germans; open the 'Gazetteer of the World,' and you will find that it is in autumn the climate is more especially unhealthy, and subject to the epidemics you have found there. Yet there you land without ambulances, without waggons, without hospital provision, without even tents. Here ends this young soldier's correspondence. Scarcely saved from cholera at Varna, cholera seized him at the first breeze from those new and more fatal shores—seized him while his comrades were landing in the

Crimea. Without common comforts, without common medical aid, he died—calling out in his delirium to be set on shore, so that he might at least perish in the field. I charge you, then, with this—that twice in one campaign you expose your army in situations notoriously pestilential at the precise seasons which you choose for both encampments. Considering this alone, we need not pause to weigh the reasons for disasters alleged by the right hon. gentleman the Secretary at War—namely, that our staff-officers had no experience of active command, and that our soldiers, selected from the peasantry, had not learned to take care of themselves. The main cause is this—the situations in which the army has been exposed, and the destitution in which it has been left; and the fault is the worse for the reasons that have been stated, namely, that our officers were not accustomed to invent resources, nor our soldiers inured to encounter hardships and disease. The defence of the Secretary of War has been chiefly directed to show that, wherever omissions were discovered and blunders made, he hastened to repair them. That excuse may avail for his department; but I maintain it is the duty of the Government, taken as a whole, not only to repair, but to foresee—to provide beforehand what may probably be wanted, and not to wait till the consequences of their own neglect start up and defy reparation. You cannot repair the loss of life; you cannot repair constitutions ruined for ever, because men were exposed to disease and deprived of proper medical attendance—because men were sent to brave all the rigour of a dismal climate, without clothing to cover and roofs to shelter them. Now even with regard to a road from Balaklava, early in the campaign we read every day in the papers that the whole region between Balaklava and Sebastopol was exposed to columns of dust. A moment's reflection would have told you that dust in the summer becomes mud with the first rains of winter; and when, after the battle of Alma, it became clear that you would have to invest Sebastopol, you should have seen to the construction of a road between your camp and your harbour. Here indeed, at first glance, Lord Raglan may seem chiefly to blame. But he told you in his despatch after the battle of Alma, that

he wished he had more men; and it might have occurred to you that with young recruits—many of them mere boys, weakened by disease, and not enough for the heavy work of the trenches—Lord Raglan might have no force to spare for the supplementary labour of roads, and also that he was deficient in the necessary animals and vehicles, and you ought not to have waited for Mr Peto's offer—your patriotism should have been no less inventive than his. It has been said, "How are Government to blame for winds and hurricanes, rains and mud?" But you are to blame for taking no pains to learn that your army would be exposed to a climate that is subject to winds and hurricanes, rains and mud. You are to blame for not resorting to the ordinary inventions of art to counteract the hostile operations of nature. When the clouds gather, a prudent man takes out his umbrella; when the wind sets in the east, he will see that his coat can button; and a man attacked by cold and disease for neglecting such everyday precautions, might as well exclaim, "How could I foresee that it would rain or that it would blow?" as you exclaim, "How could we foresee that there would be winds, rain, or mud?"—in a climate in which winds, rain, and mud are the ordinary phenomena of winter. Attempts have been made elsewhere to fix blame upon our military commanders. It was wisely as well as generously said on this score by the Secretary at War—"What generous man would indeed attack the absent agent not here to answer for himself, when there sit before us, face to face, the employers responsible for his errors so long as they continue him in office?"

But here what Lord Grenville said on the subject of the Walcheren Expedition is so apposite that I will venture to quote it—"I am disposed," said Lord Grenville, "to believe that in the situation of the commander he did all that could reasonably be expected, or was possible to accomplish. The error was in the plan, and the want of foresight and information on the part of His Majesty's Ministers. . . . The place, the situation, nay the season of the year, were chosen by them. There is a season of the year when the air of that place is most pestilential and dangerous; yet, to that place, and at that time, say His Majesty's

Ministers, we will send the flower of the British Army—we will not send it at a time when its operations may be advantageous, but we will send it when from every information it will be destroyed more by disease than by the sword." [1 Hansard, xv. 19.]

Does this apply? But it is said in defence of the War Minister, that the fault is not in himself, but the nature of his office. I am too happy to accept any palliation for his errors. But if I accept that excuse for the Minister of War, it becomes another grave charge against the collective Government, for you created that office, and why did you leave it so imperfect? Here you had no want of advice and information. You had the recommendations of a celebrated Commission, the advice of some of the ablest men, who had thoroughly examined the subject, and your excuse for not grappling with the question was, that the commencement of war was not the proper moment for a thorough reform in the War Administration, and that the proper time to make a War Office efficient was the moment of returning peace. But, at all events, the reform, as far as it went, was, according to you, an improvement on the old system; and yet under the old system we fought the wars of the Peninsula and gained the victory of Waterloo. But if the complications of this office were so mischievous, you must have discovered it long ago. Why, when you summoned Parliament for the 12th of December, could you not have reformed the office, even if you did not change the Minister, and propose to us that reform for which you are now prepared? That would have been worth calling us together for; but no, you then completed your cardinal sin of short-sighted incompetence by confining all your exertions to save the remnant of your army to two Bills, for which you said not a day was to be lost, and one of which has remained a dead letter to this hour. Here again the same eternal want of information! You go to Germany for foreign troops, and Germany declares your overtures illegal, and rejects them with scorn. I ventured to tell you that if you carried the Foreign Enlistment Bill you would never be able to use it. And now Parliament meets again, meets with fresh accounts of al-

most incredible suffering—9000 of our surviving soldiers enfeebled, I fear, by disease; the huts that should shelter the rest still at Balaklava; and Lord Raglan, according to the despatch we read this morning, still without men and vehicles to land and fix them. Men look to us, half with hope, half with despair. "What is to be done?" is the cry of every voice. No man is a more shrewd observer of public opinion than the noble Lord the Member for London, and his resignation significantly tells us what ought to be done. But if this motion succeed, if this incomparable Ministry retire, and, like the hon. Member for Middlesex (Mr B. Osborne), lose a place and find a constituency, who is to replace them? Where can we find their equals, in the unity of their councils, the foresight of their policy, and the good fortune that attends their measures? Let us compose our terrors, and face the possible calamity of such a loss with manly courage. The hon. Member for Richmond (Mr Rich) chides my right hon. friend the Member for Midhurst (Mr Walpole), because, on Friday night, he condemned the Government for basing its existence on the principle of coalition. The hon. Member for Richmond is historically correct. Looking through our modern history, I find that most of our powerful, even popular Administrations, have been more or less coalitions. Both the Administrations of Mr Pitt were coalitions; and the last was very remarkable, for he first turned out the Addington Government, and then coalesced with six of its members. Nay, he was not contented till he had netted the expelled Prime Minister himself, and made him Lord President of the Council. But then there is one indispensable element of a coalition, and that is, that its members should coalesce. Now, Sir, it is that element which seems to me wanting in the present Cabinet. It has been an union of party interests, but not a coalition of party sentiment and feeling. It was a jest of Lord Chesterfield's when a man of very obscure family married the daughter of a lady to whom scandal ascribed a large number of successful admirers, that "nobody's son had just married everybody's daughter." If I may parody that jest, I would say of this Government, that everybody's principles had united with nobody's opinions. It

is dimly intimated that the noble Lord—now in a state of transition, but, after all, he is equally illustrious as the hon. Member for Tiverton—it is intimated that the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton is intended for an appointment that some months ago would have satisfied the country, and possibly have saved the Government. I fear now that it may be too late, and among his greatest dangers will be the armed neutrality of his unsuccessful advocate and noble friend. The noble Lord the Member for London, on Friday last, attempted, not very triumphantly, to vindicate the Whigs from the charge of being an exclusive party that required all power for itself; and he found a solitary instance for the refutation of that charge in the magnanimity with which the Whigs had consented to that division of power which his desertion now so emphatically recants and condemns. But, in plain words, his vindication only amounts to this—that where the Whigs could not get all the power, they reluctantly consented to accept a part. Now, gentlemen opposite will perhaps pardon me if I say, that I think the secret of Whig exclusiveness and Whig ascendancy has been mainly this—you, the large body of independent Liberal politicians, the advocates for progress, have supposed, from the memory of former contests now ended, that while England is advancing, a large section of your countrymen, with no visible interest in existing abuses, are, nevertheless, standing still; and thus you have given, not to yourselves, not to the creed and leaders of the vast popular body, but to a small hereditary combination of great families, a fictitious monopoly of liberal policy—a genuine monopoly of lethargic government. It is my firm belief that any Administration, formed from either side of the House, should we be so unfortunate as to lose the present, would be as fully alive to the necessity of popular measures, of steady progress, of sympathy with the free and enlightened people they might aspire to govern, as any of those great men who are demagogues in opposition and oligarchs in office. But to me individually, and to the public, it is a matter of comparative indifference from what section of men a Government at this moment shall be formed, so long as it manfully represents the great cause to

which the honour and safety of England are committed, and carries into practical execution the spirit that animates the humblest tradesman, the poorest artisan who has sent his scanty earnings to the relief of our suffering army. It has been said, as the crowning excuse for the Government, that all our preceding wars have begun with blunders. Were this an arena for historical disquisition I should deny that fact; but grant it for the sake of argument. How were those blunders repaired and converted into triumphs? I know a case in point. Once in the last century there was a Duke of Newcastle, who presided over the conduct of a war, and was supported by a league of aristocratic combinations. That war was, indeed, a series of blunders and disasters. In vain attempts were made to patch up that luckless Ministry—in vain some drops of healthful blood were infused into its feeble and decrepit constitution—the people, at last, became aroused, indignant, irresistible. They applied one remedy; that remedy is now before ourselves. They dismissed their Government, and saved their army.

XVIII.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 26TH OF MARCH 1855.

ON Monday, the 9th of March 1855, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, submitted to the House of Commons in Committee a series of Resolutions for the amending of the Laws relating to the Stamp Duties on newspapers. On Monday, the 26th of March, the Bill founded upon these resolutions came on for its Second Reading. Thereupon an amendment was proposed by the Member for East Kent, Mr William Deedes, to the effect that the Bill should be taken into consideration on the 30th of the following April, because of the extreme unfitness of the moment chosen for making this change by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. After an animated discussion, the amendment was rejected upon a division by 215 votes to 161. Early in the debate the following speech was delivered.

I CAN, Sir, assure my hon. friend the mover of the proposed amendment, that it is with great pain that on this question I am conscientiously compelled to differ from him, and, I fear, from some other gentlemen on this side of the House with whose opinions on most subjects I cordially concur. Before I sit down I shall examine the validity of the arguments on which my hon. friend has based his amendment; but I am glad to hear from him that he would not restrict the debate to the cramped and narrow ground on which his amendment would place it—that

he would not reduce to a question of pounds, shillings, and pence a principle which I will endeavour to show to be one of the most important, and, in point of time, one of the most pressing, which a House of Commons can entertain. I can, indeed, advance some claim to the original paternity of the measure my hon. friend considers to be so mischievous. I believe I was the first person who ever introduced into this House a motion for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, including the stamp duty on newspapers. Sir, when my hon. friend says that this subject has not been sufficiently long before us, he must allow me to tell him, that it is more than twenty years ago that I first brought this question before the House. I was then a very young man, but the opinions I then entertained in favour of the total repeal of the newspaper stamp duty are not removed—they are strengthened by the lapse of time; for within the last twenty years there has been a great increase of intelligence among the people, and any danger to be apprehended from the sudden diffusion of cheap newspapers is, therefore, considerably less now than it was then. But why is the danger less? Why has intelligence increased? Because within the last twenty years all kinds of cheap publications have abounded, and the public have had the wisdom to choose the best and reject the worst. The very arguments now used by my hon. friend against cheap newspapers were once used much more boldly against the principle of cheap publications altogether. We were then told that the common mass of the people would prefer worthless and inflammatory works, and that to adapt the market to their pockets would be to corrupt their understandings. Now what has been the fact? Why, that in proportion as good books have been made cheap, bad books have retreated from circulation. Ask anywhere what books most please the artisan or mechanic, and you will find it is either elementary works of science, or if books of amusement, the very books of amusement that scholars and critics themselves prefer. And now that the people have thus nobly disproved the fear of cheap publications which prudent men might once have entertained, have we a right to listen for a moment to such assertions as I see the

newspaper proprietors have put forth, and my hon. friend has condescended to echo—that any newspapers cheaper than their own must necessarily appeal to the worst passions and prejudices of the lowest class? Now, Sir, is it the cheapness of the newspaper that will corrupt the artisan, or is it the baseness of the artisan that must corrupt the newspaper? What are these assertions but the most groundless declamation, disproved by all the experience we have now obtained of the taste and inclinations of the working class, disproved by the thousands and hundreds of thousands of cheap publications which have brought to the cottage and the loom—what?—a debased and contaminating literature? No, the same refined and elevated knowledge which delights and instructs ourselves. I beseech the House to separate the details of this measure from the broad principle. On the second reading of the bill, it is to the principle we should look. I agree with my hon. friend* that there are provisions in the measure that require alteration, but those portions of the bill that are objected to can be altered in committee. Many details may require hereafter our most serious consideration, but I will now only make upon some of them one or two passing remarks. For example, I think it an act of justice and sound policy not only to secure the copyright of all original matter to newspapers, but to give a cheap and summary mode of protecting that copyright similar to that which exists for copyright in manufacture under Sir Emerson Tennent's Act. I think, too, that the complaint of 'The Times' as regards itself is just. When you are introducing a general law by which newspapers are to go through the post at a penny, it seems to me fair and reasonable that you should take as your standard of weight or size that newspaper which has the largest circulation and in which the public feel the deepest degree of interest. I am told that the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer means to recur to the principle of weight. If so, I say, weigh 'The Times' as your standard—

> "Expende Annibalem—quot libras in duce summo
> Invenies."

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* Mr Deedes.

And it seems to me not a worthy distinction in so wholesale a change to separate 'The Times' from the Supplement, which is an integral part of the paper, and that, too, a part of which the unrestricted diffusion is of so great an importance to the intellectual and commercial community. I agree in all that my hon. friend has said with regard to the high character of the press of this country. Far from entertaining any grudge to the existing newspaper press, far from seeking to undervalue its signal merits, I grant that it is an honour to the country from the ability of its compositions, the integrity of the men who adorn it, the vast and various information it diffuses, and, making fair allowances for the heat of party spirit and the temptations of anonymous power, for its general exemption from wilful calumny and personal slander. And if I desired to leave to remote posterity some memorial of existing British civilisation, I would prefer—not our docks, not our railways, not our public buildings, not even the palace in which we now hold our sittings—I would prefer a file of 'The Times' newspaper. Could I, then, believe that the change proposed would deteriorate the moral and intellectual character of the newspaper press, I fear I might have the weakness to cling to the existing system, if it had not so crumbled away that I can find nothing to cling to but an Attorney-General who dares not prosecute, and a jury that would not convict. But, then, it is the taste of the public that forms the newspaper, not the newspaper that forms the taste of the public; and if the press is an honour to the country, it is because it represents what honours the country still more—the good sense and civilised humanity from which the press takes its colour and its tone. Now, you have been told that this change will degrade our press to the level of the American, and you have been led to infer that the American press is left solely in the hands of ignorant adventurers, whereas the remarkable peculiarity of the American press is that it represents nearly all the intellect of that country. There is scarcely a statesman of eminence, an author of fame, who does not contribute to the American periodical press; and, therefore, the editor of one of their journals says on this very subject, "If the American press is inferior to

the English, it merely argues that the intellect of the country is inferior, for nearly all the available intellect of the United States is engaged in their press." This serves to show you that if our press is superior to the American, it does not depend upon fiscal laws, but upon the general standard of civilisation; in other words, the press can but reflect the public.

Upon the financial part of the question, on the alleged loss to the revenue, I will touch later; but I cannot consent to allow the grand principle involved in this Bill to be dwarfed down to the level of a budget. What is that principle? I will place it upon broader ground than that taken by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, indeed, seems to regard the bill rather with the reluctant and frigid toleration of a stepfather than the glowing love of a parent. The principle is this—that you ought not in a free country to lay a tax on the expression of political opinion—a tax on the diffusion of that information on public affairs which the spirit of our constitution makes the interest and concern of every subject in the State. Still more, you should not, by means of that tax, create such an artificial necessity for capital that you secure the monopoly of thought upon the subjects that most interest the public at large to a handful of wealthy and irresponsible oligarchs. That is the principle at stake; that is the question before you. Turn it as you will, you cannot get rid of the fact that as long as this newspaper stamp duty exists, no man, whatever his knowledge, his honesty, his talent, the soundness of his conservative opinions, can set up a daily journal on the affairs of the country without an enormous capital—not even a weekly one without a capital of some thousand pounds; and, therefore, the stamp duty does confine the liberty of expressing opinion as much as if the State actually sold for a large sum of money the right to monopolise the market of public information. Now, one result of thus narrowing the representation of opinion is, that large sections of opinion are either not represented at all, or represented very inadequately. And I doubt very much if there are ten thoughtful men on either side the House who can say that, on many of the most important questions, there is now one daily newspaper

with which they can cordially agree. Take the great Conservative party; consider, first, its numbers throughout the kingdom —in the counties generally a large majority; in the towns, even most hostile, generally a large and influential minority; compute its strength, not in numbers alone, but comparative intelligence; consider how large a share of the highly cultivated classes—in the learned professions, in commerce, among the gentry—entertain Conservative opinions. Now turn to the daily newspapers, and ask yourselves if those opinions are represented in any proportion to the numbers and intellectual eminence of their supporters throughout the country? There are two ways of representing public opinion—one through Parliament, the other through the press. Now, I ask, how are the Conservatives represented in Parliament? My hon. friends will tell me that they are confessedly the largest single and integral body in the House of Commons. How are they represented in the press? Why, no single subdivision of political opinion is represented so sparingly. Compute the number of Conservative journals, compute the number of copies they sell, at the price you are told to keep up, and you will be perfectly astounded at the disparity between the influence of the Conservative party in the country and their representation in the press. But if this stamp duty were removed—if every able man among you had the right to defend your cause in the form of a journal without this necessity for capital—can you doubt that all which talent or knowledge can bring to bear on behalf of your political creed would find its fair and natural channel? And though the best newspaper, as a record of news, will be always that which has the largest capital, yet the best opinions are not always found in the best newspapers; and many readers who would take one journal for the sake of its general news would take another on account of their sympathy with its political doctrines. No doubt all opinions—those you condemn as well as those you approve—would obtain their utterance. But twenty years ago I assured myself that on the Liberal side of the question safe and sound thinkers would hold it an imperative duty to stand forward and counteract the danger of all socialist and revolutionary doctrines; and, on the

Conservative side, are we so barren of literary talent, or so indifferent to the spread of our principles, that free competition will not yield us additional advocates? No; a host of writers would appear to divest the popular mind of those prejudices against existing institutions which are now left to circulate in defiance of this law, and without any answer at all; for I cannot learn that there is at this moment a single Conservative journal which penetrates the mass of the working class. Sir, I am convinced that if this stamp duty, this obstacle were removed, many an eminent public man, many an eminent man of letters, would start small cheap papers, not attempting to vie or interfere with the special province of 'The Times,' but conveying opinions stamped by the responsibility of his avowed name. You would thus call in the principle of cheap competition, not to lower, but to elevate still more the character of the newspaper press; for nothing would so exalt the social position of gentlemen engaged in newspaper literature as some signal exceptions to that anonymous mystery which now shrouds all attacks on the characters of public men. I do not mean to say that the preservation of the anonymous system may not at times be useful and even necessary; but I do say that its rigid and uniform use is the only power of the press which I hold to be invidious and derogatory. No more able, no more accomplished gentlemen than the contributors to the higher departments of the press can adorn our circles; yet it is in vain to deny that we feel a certain uneasiness in the social intercourse with men to the exercise of whose talents secrecy is so imperative a law that the man who clasps us by the hand to-day may, in the discharge of his professional duty, sting us to the quick to-morrow, darkly and in secret. Mr Fox once told this House an anecdote of a witness—on a trial, I think, for murder—who gave his testimony against another man on the ground that a ghost had appeared to him, and said so and so. "Well," said the judge, who was a person of considerable humour, "I have no objection to take the evidence of the ghost; let him be brought into court." These anonymous newspaper-writers are as ghosts. We do not object

to take their evidence, but there are times when I should like them brought into court.

This subject has been far too much argued as if it were a question between the tax collector and the newspaper proprietors. I could not help smiling when the other evening I heard an hon. member say that they did not complain of the law, and why, then, should it be changed? What corporate body, I ask, ever did complain of a law which restricted competition, and secured to itself a virtual monopoly? And I am perfectly amazed to see these journals, most of which honoured us poor Protectionists with such hard names, now arming themselves with all the antiquated arguments in favour of protective duties, amounting to absolute prohibition, which during the last ten years of the discussion on the corn laws the stoutest friend of the farmer would not have ventured to use. Sir, the question really is between the tax collector and the public; and it is this—whether it is not time that we should enforce that great principle of the constitution of civil liberty, and of common-sense, which says that opinion shall go free, not stinted nor filched away by fiscal arrangements, but subject always to the laws of the country against treason, blasphemy, and slander. Those laws will still remain, though the question has been argued as if they were to be swept away. But thus much it is just to say on behalf of the working classes, to whom we are told that cheap libellous periodicals will especially appeal—that no class hitherto has so little supported newspapers of a libellous and gossiping character as the working classes of this country. I remember when certain Sunday journals profaned the Sabbath by hebdomadal ribaldry and scandal. Who supported them? I fear it was the clubs and the drawing-rooms. Certainly it was not the working class; and those journals ultimately perished, because they could obtain no circulation among the common people, and no sympathy from the public in the actions that were brought against them. It is a remarkable fact, and one that shows how little the danger of publications depends on their price, that profligate and licentious literature always begins by corrupting the

higher class before it reaches the lower. I know no instance to the contrary in the history of all literature, ancient or modern. Take the examples with which we are most familiar. It was the nobles and wits, the well-born abbés and great ladies of Paris, who brought into fashion and introduced to the artisans of France the chimeras of Rousseau, the infidelity of Voltaire. And I do not believe that the inflammatory catchpennies that now, in defiance of your law, circulate through our manufacturing towns, would last six months after the repeal of the stamp duty had removed the morbid attraction which belongs to things proscribed and forbidden, and exposed them to the competition of sound and healthful writings at the same price. This is not a mere theory, it has been partially tried. It appears in the evidence of the Committee of 1851, that the appearance of one or two legal threepenny papers in London, though they were by no means first-rate, sufficed to destroy an immense swarm of unstamped pernicious publications which had before circulated throughout the metropolis. Let us, then, do with this field of letters, what we country gentlemen are learning to do with our fields at home; if we want the corn to have fair play, we clear away an unnecessary hedgerow full of thorns and brambles, and expose the ground well to the sun and to the air. But at this time of day it is superfluous to argue the principle that opinion should not be indirectly suppressed by a tax, when the boldest man among us dare not invade it by an open law; and, indeed, if we desired to do so, we have no longer the power. The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us, without any exaggeration, though perhaps rather reluctantly, that the stamp duty has broken down in all directions. There are not, as he states, only 100, for there are no less than 250 publications subject to the Statute, only partially stamped, and all liable to prosecution. If you do not prosecute them all, with what justice can you prosecute one. It is all very well for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say, with that grim complacency, if you don't pass this bill you must arm the Government with new laws—with new powers of prosecution. Now, Sir, I feel confident that this House of Commons will do

no such thing; if we did frame new laws for checking the circulation of knowledge, or if we did make what is asked—a new arbitrary distinction between political journals and those of a different nature, we should do more to expedite the march of a democratic Reform Bill than all which the restless spirit of the noble lord the Member for London—that is to say, when out of office—could effect. And if we were blind and harsh enough to frame such laws, I should like to see the Attorney-General who would have the courage to enforce them, or the Government that would have the insanity to allow him. While we discuss, the law for all good purposes is virtually dead. You may retain the sword for a time in its nerveless hand; I defy you to renew the energy of its muscles; I defy you to strike the blow.

I now come to my hon. friend's amendment. He says, "Will you hazard the loss of £200,000 of revenue at a time when you will require new taxes for carrying on the war with Russia?" But against what do ye wage war? It is not against Russia as Russia. In commercial interchange Russia is our natural ally. It is against Russia when she appears as the symbol of barbaric usurpation and brute force. Why, then, out of the millions you devote to secure the distant boundaries of civilisation, grudge a paltry fraction towards the service of those two great agents of civilisation at home—freedom of opinion and popular knowledge? I ask my hon. friend, is there any usurpation more barbarous than that which usurps the utterance of thought upon public affairs? Is there any type of brute force more odious than that which an Attorney-General will embody if he is to say to a jury, "This publication is harmless—nay, its contents are most valuable; but the proprietor was not rich enough to pay a duty imposed on the liberty of printing, and I call upon you, in the name of the law, to stifle the knowledge you admire, and to ruin the man who has a claim to your gratitude"? Now, Sir, I do not believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer will lose one single farthing, if he adds to his bill, as is proposed, the privilege of transmitting all printed papers by the post at the same proportional charge as periodical journals. More than twenty years ago I went carefully into the details on this very subject,

for it formed a part of my own scheme, and I convinced myself that the number of tracts of all kinds, religious, literary, or commercial—of catalogues of booksellers and land agents—of writings purely intended for diffusion—would, under the plan proposed by the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford * yield a sum far exceeding the deficit now alleged, while the addition to the paper duty itself will, I think, prove sufficient compensation. But even if it were otherwise—I put this question to my hon. friends as Conservatives—are £200,000 too dear a purchase for restoring authority to laws that no more stringent provisions will enable you to enforce? Should the dignity and efficacy of the law be to Conservatives mere items of revenue? No; they are objects beyond all price: and I am persuaded that we should not have heard a word on the fiscal part of the question—never have had this amendment—if hon. gentlemen were but convinced that the measure itself were safe and prudent; if certain interested parties out of doors had not sought to alarm us by assertions of another kind of danger than that of loss to the revenue—assertions so absurd to the sense of all who are acquainted with the practical conditions of our literature, that those who make them would be the first to laugh at our credulity if we believed them—assertions that a five-penny journal must be respectable, and a penny journal must be licentious, and all such trumpery as I find in this notable eclecticism of twaddle and bugbear which has been circulated among us, and called "Objections to the Newspaper Stamp Act." This was against the first bill, but it is meant equally to apply to the present. Here I find it stated that among the most active agents for a change are persons whose avowed object is the diffusion of opinions adverse to religion and subversive of the rights of property. And this courteous insinuation against those who differ from themselves is put forth by the very innocents who have such a horror of libel! Whom they mean, I know not. Among the most active for a change are the hon. Members for Manchester and the West Riding, who hold doctrines some of us consider extreme, but at least they express

* Mr Gladstone.

their doctrines openly and plainly, and I have never yet heard that they avowed opinions adverse to religion and subversive of property. Among those whom I have remembered most favourable to a repeal of this duty were the late Lord Althorp, Lord Brougham, Lord Campbell. Lord Lyndhurst has, I think, expressed himself in favour of it. There is also that very natural enemy to the rights of property, the heir of the house of Derby.* There is that notorious foe to religion, the representative of the University of Oxford.† And the most active agents for a change are her Majesty's Ministers, who, whatever their faults, are, I presume, tolerably well satisfied with what is called the established order of things. I have looked well through this paper; all its arguments are comprised in two libels; one against those who advocate cheap newspapers, the other against those who will read them. It reminds me of what Horace Walpole said of a lady, "That she had as fine a set of teeth as any one could have who had only two, and both of them black." Do not let hon. members be thus led away. Do not let Conservatives continue to be cheated out of all fair chance to explain their opinions to the working class. My right hon. friend the Member for Droitwich,‡ in the course of his luminous speech on introducing his noble bill on education, alluded to the letters of our private soldiers in the Crimea, which have excited such just admiration. Let me ask, Sir, how have the minds of these soldiers been trained to love and defend their country?—trained to those great conservative principles, humanity, discipline, fortitude, and patience? Is it not, in part, by the cheap publications that have instructed the childhood of the present generation; and ought not that to teach you how little, as Conservatives, you have to fear from any department of cheap knowledge? Do not fancy that this penny tax is a slight imposition. Do not fancy that a penny paper is necessarily low and bad. Once there existed a penny daily paper—it was called 'The Spectator.' Addison and Steele were its contributors. It did more to refine the manners of this people than half the books in the British Museum. Suddenly a halfpenny tax was put on that penny

* Lord Stanley. † Mr Gladstone. ‡ Sir John Pakington.

paper, and so one fatal morning the most pleasing and graceful instructor that ever brought philosophy to the fireside had vanished from the homes of men. True that it survived the first stroke which laid low its feebler contemporaries; it doubled its price—it did not immediately decline in its circulation; Dean Swift believed that it would still lift up its head, and march gallantly under its burthen. But no; it began to stagger —to droop. On the third month from the day it first took the load, with so haughty a crest, it fell to the ground: an attempt was made by its writers to raise it under a new name, and strengthen it by the tonic of party politics; that attempt, too, finally succumbed. It then, after a long interval, resumed its old appellation—'The Spectator' appeared again. Addison put into it the noblest efforts of his strength—in vain. The fatal tax was too powerful for Addison. In a few months it sank, never to revive. Yes, Sir, a halfpenny tax sufficed to extinguish 'The Spectator,' and divorce that exquisite alliance which genius had established between mirth and virtue. I turn to my hon. friends around me. I say that I am convinced, earnestly and conscientiously convinced, that a penny journal, containing moderate Conservative opinions, managed by some gentlemen as familiarly acquainted with the tastes and feelings of the humbler classes as, for instance, many of our plain squires and country clergy are, would do more to popularise Conservatism, than half the party speeches we make in this house. For what is Conservatism? Surely not that which its enemies, surely not that which three-fourths of these fivepenny journals, represent it to be? It is not a stern and lifeless system of restraint and terror, but a warm and generous love for the free laws, the liberal altars, and the glorious people of the land in which we live. Is it the constitution you would conserve? What is this English constitution? Not a crazy and decrepit form that must shrink from every breath of air, that cannot face the rude popular gaze, nor stand the manly shock of contending opinions. No; it is a robust organisation of sound principles, which has received its life and its soul not more from the wisdom of statesmen than from the courage of dauntless patriots: as such, are we not

bound, we lovers of the constitution, to prove that we do not fear discussion? Are we not bound, we Conservatives bound especially, to justify resistance to wanton inroads on that constitution, by showing that it needs no hazardous Reform Bill to give to the people every access to knowledge—every facility to make themselves better and wiser? And it is because I believe this to be our duty and our policy as true Conservatives; it is because I hail an occasion to show that we do not dread the good sense of the humblest class of our countrymen in any fair discussion between them and us; it is because I am convinced that, as we widen the field of literature, we raise up new champions for ourselves, and best counteract the poison to which a worthless law now forbids the antidote—that I give to the main principle of this measure my most cordial and hearty support.

XIX.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON THE 4TH OF JUNE 1855.

ON Thursday, the 24th of May 1855, the leader of the Opposition, Mr Disraeli, moved, in the then crisis of the Crimean War, the subjoined resolution—

"That this House cannot adjourn for the recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of her Majesty's Government in reference to the great question of peace or war; and that, under these circumstances, this House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for the country a safe and honourable peace." After a discussion which lasted for six nights, a revised resolution was accepted by the Government and assented to without a division by the Commons, to the effect, "That this House, having seen with regret that the Conferences of Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it a duty," &c., in the closing terms of the original resolution. On the third night of the debate the following speech was delivered.

SIR,—The right hon. gentleman the Member for Manchester,* towards the close of his able speech, summed up his strongest objections to the continuance of the war, by asking how it would profit the country. In answer to that question, let me remind the right hon. gentleman of the laudable earnest-

* Mr Milner Gibson.

ness with which, in a recent debate, he assured the House that he and those with whom he concurred in the policy to be adopted for the restoration of peace, were no less anxious than we are for the due maintenance of the national honour. I cordially believe him; and when he asks how the continuance of the war can profit the country, I answer, because the continuance of the war is as yet essential to the vindication of the national honour, and because the national honour is the bulwark of the national interests. For there is this distinction between individuals and nations: with the first a jealous tenacity of honour may be a mere sentiment, with the last it is a condition of power. If you lower the honour of a man in the eyes of his equals, he may still say, "My fortune is not attacked, my estate is unimpaired, the laws still protect my rights and my person, I can still command my dependants and bestow my beneficence upon those who require my aid;" but if you lower the honour of a nation in the eyes of other states, and especially a nation like England, which owes her position, not to her territories, but to her character—not to the amount of her armies, nor even to the pomp of her fleets, but to a general belief in her high spirit and indomitable will—her interests will be damaged in proportion to the disparagement of her name. You do not only deface her scutcheon, you strike down her shield. Her credit will be affected, her commerce will suffer at its source. Take the awe from her flag, and you take the wealth from her merchants; in future negotiations her claims will be disputed, and she can never again interfere with effect against violence and wrong in behalf of liberty and right. These are some of the consequences which might affect the interests of this country if other nations could say, even unjustly, that England had grown unmindful of her honour. But would they not say it with indisputable justice if, after encouraging Turkey to a war with her most powerful enemy, we could accept any terms of peace which Turkey herself indignantly refuses to indorse? Honour, indeed, is a word on which many interpreters may differ, but at least all interpreters must agree upon this, that the essential of honour is fidelity to engagements. What are the engagements by which

we have pledged ourselves to Turkey? Freedom from the aggressions of Russia! Is that all? No;—reasonable guarantees that the aggressions shall not be renewed. But would any subject of the Ottoman empire think such engagements fulfilled by a peace that would not take from Russia a single one of the fortresses, a single one of the ships by which she now holds Constantinople itself under the very mouth of her cannon? Sir, both the Members for Manchester have the merit of consistency in the cause they espouse. They were against this war from he first. But I cannot conceive how any member of that Government which led us into this war, and is responsible for all it has cost us, should now suddenly adopt the language of Peace Societies, and hold it as a crime if we push to success the enterprise he and his colleagues commenced by a failure. I approach the arguments of the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford* with a profound respect for his rare intellect and eloquence, and still more for that genuine earnestness which assures us that if he ever does diverge into sophistry and paradox, it is not till he has religiously puzzled his conscience into a belief of their simplicity and truth. The main argument on which the right hon. gentleman rests the vindication of the views he entertains is this: He says, "I supported the war at the commencement, because then it was just; I would now close the war, because its object may be attained by negotiation." That is his proposition; I would state it fairly. But what at the commencement was the object of the war, stripped of all diplomatic technicalities? The right hon. gentleman would not, I am sure, accept the definition of his ex-colleague the right hon. Member for Southwark,† that one object of the war was to punish Russia for her insolence—a doctrine I should never have expected in so accomplished a philosopher as my right hon. friend, the pupil of Bentham and the editor of 'Hobbes.' Either in war or legislation punishment is only a means which has for its object the prevention of further crime. The right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford will no doubt say with me, the object was

* Mr Gladstone. † Sir William Molesworth.

the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire. But how did he describe that object in his speech at Manchester in September 1853? He said then to that important audience, I quote his very words—

"Remember the independence and integrity of Turkey are not like the independence and integrity of England and France. It is a Government full of anomaly, of difficulty, and distress." This is the mode in which, simultaneously with those articles in the 'Times' quoted by the right hon. Member for Manchester* at the very eve of a war that the right hon. Member for the University of Oxford then believed to be just, and when he would naturally place the object in the most favourable light his convictions would permit before the people whose ardour it became his duty to rouse, whose pockets it was his office to tax—this is the laudatory mode in which the right hon. gentleman warmed the enthusiasm of his listeners to acknowledge the justice of his object; and is the statesman who at the onset could take so chilling a view of all the great human interests involved in this struggle, likely to offer us unprejudiced and effective counsels for securing to Turkey that independence and integrity in which he sees anomaly and distress, and in which we see the safeguard to Europe? The right hon. gentleman complains that the terms in which our object is to be sought are now unwisely extended? Who taught us to extend them? Who made not only the terms, but the object itself, indefinite? Was it not the head of the Government of which the right hon. gentleman was so illustrious a member? Did not Lord Aberdeen, when repeatedly urged to state to what terms of peace he would apply the epithets "safe" and "honourable," as repeatedly answer, "That must depend on the fortune of war; and the terms will be very different if we receive them at Constantinople or impose them at St Petersburg"? Sir, if I may say so without presumption, I always disapproved that language; I always held the doctrine that if we once went to war it should be for nothing more and nothing less than justice. [Mr M. Gibson—Hear, hear.] Ay, but do not let me dishonestly catch that cheer, for I must add, and also

* Mr Milner Gibson.

for adequate securities that justice will be maintained. No reverses should induce us to ask for less—no conquests justify us in demanding more. But when the right hon. gentleman, being out of office, now also asserts that doctrine, why did he not refuse his sanction to the noble earl, who took the whole question out of the strict limits of abstract justice, the moment he made the indefinite arbitration of military success the only principle to guide us in the objects and terms of peace? And if the right hon. gentleman rigidly desired to limit our war to one of protection, how could he have consented to sit in a Cabinet which at once changed its whole character into a war of invasion? All the complications which now surround us—all the difficulties in the way of negotiation which now so perplex even the right hon. gentleman's piercing intellect—date from the day you landed on the Crimea, and laid siege to Sebastopol. I do not say your strategy was wrong; but, wrong or right, when you invaded the Crimea, you inevitably altered the conditions on which to re-establish peace. The right hon. gentleman was a party to that campaign, and he cannot now shrink from its logical consequences. Those consequences are the difficulties comprehended in the third article—the lie that your policy would give to your actions if you accepted the conditions proposed by Russia; for why did you besiege Sebastopol, but because it was that fortress which secured to Russia her preponderance in the Black Sea, and its capture or dismantlement was the material guarantee you then and there pledged yourselves to obtain for the independence of Turkey and the security of Europe? And if the fortunes of war do not allow you yet to demand that Sebastopol be disfortified, they do authorise you to demand an equivalent in Russia's complete resignation of a fleet in the Black Sea; for at this moment not one Russian ship can venture to show itself in those waters. If the right hon. gentleman is perplexed to determine what mode of limiting the Russian preponderance can be invented, one rule for his guidance at least he is bound to consider imperative—namely, that the mode of limitation must be one which shall content not England alone, but the ally to whom the faith of England was pledged by the Cabinet which the

right hon. gentleman adorned. It is strange to what double uses the right hon. gentleman can put an ally. When we wished to inquire into the causes of calamities to an army purely our own—calamities which the right hon. gentleman thinks were so exaggerated—an exaggeration that inquiry has not served to dispel—then we were told, "What are you doing? Take care! To inquire into the fate of an English army may offend and alienate your ally, France." But now, when the right hon. gentleman would have desired us to patch up a peace, he forgets altogether that we have an ally upon the face of the globe. He recommends us singly to creep out of the quarrel with Russia, and would leave us equally exposed to the charge of desertion by Turkey and of perfidy by France. But it has been insinuated—I know not on what authority—that France would have listened to these terms if we had advised it. If this be true, I thank our Government for declining such a responsibility. For if, in that noble courtesy which has characterised the Emperor of the French in his intercourse with us, he had yielded to your instances, and consented to resume and complete negotiations based upon terms he had before refused, who amongst us can lay his hand on his heart and say that a peace which would have roused the indignation even of our commercial and comparatively pacific people, might not so have mortified the pride of that nation of soldiers to which the name of Napoleon was the title-deed to empire, as to have shaken the stability of a throne which now seems essential to the safety and social order of the civilised globe? "Oh," says the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, with a solecism in logic which I could never have expected from so acute a reasoner, "see how Russia has gradually come down to terms which she before so contemptuously scouted. In February 1853, she declared such and such terms were incompatible with her honour; she would dictate terms to Turkey only at St Petersburg, under the frown of the Czar, or at the headquarters of the Russian camp; and now see how mild and equitable Russia has become." Yes; but how was that change effected? By diplomacy and negotiation? By notes and protocols? No—these had been tried in

vain; the result of these was the levying of armaments—the seizure of provinces—the massacre of Sinope. That change was effected by the sword—effected in those fields of Alma and Inkerman to which the right hon. gentleman so touchingly appealed—effected by those military successes inspired by the passion for fame and glory, on which, as principles of action, his humanity is so bitterly sarcastic. The right hon. gentleman dwelt in a Christian spirit, which moved us all, on the gallant blood that had been shed by us, our allies, and even by our foes, in this unhappy quarrel. But did it never occur to him that, all the while he was speaking, this question was irresistibly forcing itself on the minds of his English audience—"And shall all this blood have been shed in vain? Was it merely to fertilise the soil of the Crimea with human bones? And shall we, who have buried there two-thirds of our army, still leave a fortress at Sebastopol and a Russian fleet in the Black Sea, eternally to menace the independence of that ally whom our heroes have perished to protect?" And would not that blood have been shed in vain? Talk of recent negotiations effecting the object for which you commenced the war! Let us strip those negotiations of diplomatic quibbles, and look at them like men of common-sense. Do not let gentlemen be alarmed lest I should weary them with going at length over such hackneyed ground—two minutes will suffice. The direct question involved is to terminate the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea; and with this is involved another question—to put an end to the probabilities of renewed war rising out of the position which Russia would henceforth occupy in those waters. Now the first proposition of Russia is to open to all ships the passage of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. "That is the right thing," says the right hon. Member for Manchester. Yes, so it would be if Russia had not the whole of that coast bristling with her fortresses; but while those fortresses remain it is simply to say, "Let Russia increase as she pleases the maritime force she can direct against Turkey, sheltered by all the strongholds she has established on the coasts; and let France and England keep up, if they please, the perpetual surveillance of naval squadrons in

a sea, as the note of the French Minister well expresses it, 'where they could find neither a port of refuge nor an arsenal of supply.'" This does not, on the one hand, diminish the preponderance of Russia; it only says you may, at great expense, and with great disadvantages, keep standing navies to guard against its abuse; and, on the other hand, far from putting an end to the probabilities of war, it leaves the fleets of Russia perpetually threatening Turkey, and the fleets of England and France perpetually threatening Russia. And while such a position could hardly fail sooner or later to create jealousy between England and France, I can scarcely imagine any disease that would more rot away the independence of Turkey than this sort of chronic protection established in her own waters. The second proposition, which retains the *mare clausum*, not only leaves the preponderance of Russia exactly what it was before the war began, but, in granting to the Sultan the power to summon his allies at any moment he may require them, exposes you to the fresh outbreak of hostilities whenever the Sultan might even needlessly take alarm; but with these differences between your present and future position,—first, that Russia would then be strengthened, and you might be unprepared; and next, that while, as I said before, now not one Russian flag can show itself on those waters, you might then, before you could enter the Straits, find that flag waving in triumph over the walls of the Seraglio. And, to prove that this is no imaginary danger, just hear what is said upon the subject by the practical authority of Marshal Marmont, which was loosely referred to the other night by the noble lord the Member for London*—and remember the Marshal is speaking at a period when the force of Russia in those parts was far inferior to what it would be now if you acceded to her terms—"At Sebastopol, Russia has twelve sail of the line, perfectly armed and equipped." Let me here observe that the Marshal recommends that this number should be increased to thirty, and says that if Sebastopol were made the harbour of a powerful navy, nothing could prevent Russia from imposing laws on the Mediterranean. "In the immediate neighbourhood a division

* Lord John Russell.

of the army is cantoned; it could embark in two days, and in three more reach Constantinople—the distance between Sebastopol and the Bosphorus being only 180 miles, and a speedy passage almost a matter of certainty, owing to the prevalence of northerly winds, and the constant current from the Euxine towards the Sea of Marmora. Thus, on the apprehension of interference from the allied fleet, that of Russia would pass and take up such a position as circumstances might dictate, while an army of 60,000 men would cross the Danube, pass the Balkan, and place itself at Adrianople; these movements being effected with such promptitude and facility that no circumstances whatever could prevent their being carried into execution." And now I put it to the candour of those distinguished advocates for the Russian proposals, whose sincerity I am sure is worthy of their character and talents, whether the obvious result of both these propositions for peace is not to keep four Powers in the unrelaxing attitude of war—one of those Powers always goaded on by cupidity and ambition, the other three always agitated by jealousy and suspicion? And is it on such a barrel of gunpowder as this that you would ask the world to fall asleep? But, say the hon. gentlemen, "the demand of the Western Powers on the third article is equally inadequate to effect the object." Well, I think there they have very much proved their case—very much proved how fortunate it was that negotiations were broken off. However, when a third point is to be raised again let us clear it of all difficulties, and raise it not in a Congress of Vienna but within the walls of Sebastopol. Sir, before I pass from this part of the subject, let me respectfully address one suggestion to those earnest and distinguished reasoners who would make peace their paramount object. You desire peace as soon as possible; do you think you take the right way to obtain it? Do you think that when Russia can say—"Here are members of the very Government who commenced the war declaring that our moderation has removed all ground for further hostilities—they are backed by the most conspicuous leaders of the popular party—the representatives of those great manufacturing interests which so often influence and sometimes control the councils of a commercial

State,"—do you think that Russia will not also add, "These are signs that encourage us, the Russian empire, to prosecute the war—they are signs that our enemy foresees the speedy exhaustion of its means, the relaxing ardour of its people, and must, after some bravado, accept the terms which are recommended in the national assembly by experienced statesmen and popular tribunes"? You are leading Russia to deceive herself, to deceive her subjects. You are encouraging her to hold out, and every speech you make in such a strain a Russian General might read to his troops, a Russian Minister might translate to trembling merchants and beggared nobles, if he desired to animate them all to new exertions against your country. I do not wish to malign and misrepresent you. I respect the courage with which you avow unpopular opinions. I know that you are patriots as sincere as we are. You have proved your attachment to the abstract principle of freedom; but do reflect whether you make a right exercise of your powers if, when we are sending our sons and kinsmen to assist a cause which would at least secure weakness from aggression, and the free development of one nation from the brute force of another, you take the part of the enemy against your country. [Mr M. Gibson—No, no.] "No, no!" What means that denial? You take part with the enemy when you say he is in the right, and against your country when you say we are in the wrong. You transfer from our cause to his that consciousness of superior justice which gives ardour to the lukewarm, endurance to the hesitating, and by vindicating his quarrel you invigorate his arms. If I now turn to the amendments before the House, I know not one that I can thoroughly approve; not, of course, that by the hon. Member for the University of Oxford,* not that of the hon. Member for Kidderminster,† for I feel no regret that Russia should not have terminated hostilities by accepting proposals inadequate, in my judgment, to secure our object; while I think it scarcely consistent with the prerogative of the Crown, and might furnish a dangerous precedent hereafter, if we were to contest the right of her Majesty to judge for herself whether the means of peace on the basis

* Sir William Heathcote. † Mr Lowe.

of the third negotiation are exhausted or not. The amendment of the right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Sir F. Baring) would have been more complimentary to the quarter whence he stole it if he had not added the crime of murder to that of theft. He takes the infant from the paternal cradle, cuts it in half, and the head which he presents to us has no longer a leg to stand upon. The original motion of my right hon. friend the Member for Buckinghamshire,* in censuring the Government for ambiguous language and uncertain conduct, gave a substantial reason for conveying to her Majesty that we, at least, would support her in the conduct of the war. Omit that censure—imply by your silence that there is no reason to distrust her Majesty's responsible advisers—and the rest of the resolution becomes an unmeaning platitude. It is with great satisfaction that I think of the effect produced by the original motion of my right hon. friend, for to my mind that effect atones for its want of success in meeting with the sanction of the House. It has not, it is true, changed the Government, but it assuredly has changed their tone. I do not know whether that change will be lasting, but I hope that we are not to take, as a test of the earnestness of a Government thus suddenly galvanised into vigour, the speech of the noble lord the Member for London, which, before the division, implied so much, but which, after the division, was explained away in so remarkable a manner. I rejoice that in wringing direct declarations from the Government it leaves us free to discuss that which is before us, not as Englishmen against Englishmen, but as citizens of one common state equally interested in surveying the grounds of a common danger. Much reference has been made, in the course of this debate, as to the position of Austria. The mediation of Austria is withdrawn for the present, but Austria is still there, always ready to mediate as long as she hesitates to act. It is well to consider what may be our best position with regard to a Power with which we shall constantly be brought into contact. I cannot too earnestly entreat you to distinguish between the friendship with Austria and the alliance with Austria. I think it of the utmost importance, if you would confine

* Mr Disraeli.

this war within compact and definite limits, that you should maintain friendly terms with a Power which, as long as it is neutral, if it cannot serve, does not harm you, and which you could not seriously injure without casting out of the balance of Europe one of the weights most necessary to the equilibrium of the scales. It is easy to threaten Austria with the dismemberment of her ill-cemented empire—easy to threaten her with reduction to a fourth-rate Power. But she has this answer to the practical sagacity of England and the chivalrous moderation of France: "I, the Empire of Austria, am not less essential as a counterpoise to France than the integrity of Turkey is essential as a barrier against Russia. If the balance of power be not a mere dream, I trust my cause to every statesman by whom the balance of power is respected." But though, for this and for other reasons, I would desire you to maintain friendly relations with Austria, pardon me if I doubt the wisdom of having so urgently solicited her alliance. Supposing you had now gained it, what would you have done? Just what a Government here might do if it pressed into its Cabinet some able and influential man with views not congenial to its own, and who used his power on your councils to modify the opinions and check the plans upon which you had before been united. Add Austria now, while she is still timid and reluctant, to the two Western Powers —give her a third coequal voice in all the conduct of the war, and it could only introduce into their councils a certain element of vacillation and discord. But if you bide your time, preserving Austria in her present attitude of friendly neutrality, if you do not threaten and affront her into action against you—the natural consequences of continued war, the common inclinations of her statesmen and her people—which I have reason to know are not favourable to Russia—will bring her to you at length with coincidence in your objects, because according to the dictates of her own sense of self-interest. As far as I can judge, our tone with Austria has been much too supplicating, and our mode of arguing with her somewhat ludicrous. It reminds one of the story of an American who saw making up to him in the woods an enormous bear. Upon that he betook himself to his devo-

tions, and exclaimed,—"O Lord, there is going to be a horrible fight between me and the bear, all I seek is fair-play and no favour: if there is justice in heaven you ought to help me; but if you won't help me, don't help the bear." But now comes the grave and solemn problem which the withdrawal of all negotiation forces still more upon the mind of every one who thinks deeply, and which the right hon. gentleman the Member for Manchester has so properly raised. War being fairly upon us, of what nature shall be that war? Shall it assume that vast and comprehensive character which excites in the hon. Member for Aylesbury* hopes for the human race too daring even for him to detail to this sober House? In plain words, shall it be a war in which, to use the language of Mr Canning in 1826, you will enlist "all those who, whether justly or unjustly, are dissatisfied with their own countries;" in which you will imitate the spirit of revolutionary France, when she swept over Europe, and sought to reconcile humanity to slaughter by pointing to a rainbow of freedom on the other side of the deluge? Does history here give to the hon. member an example or a warning? How were these promises fulfilled? Look round Europe! You had the carnage—where is the freedom? The deluge spread, the deluge rolled away—half a century is fled, and where is the rainbow visible? Is it on the ruins of Cracow?—on the field of Novara?—or over the walls of defeated Rome? No; in a war that invokes liberal opinion against established rule what I most dread and deprecate is, not that you will fulfil your promises and reap the republics for which you sowed rebellions,—what I dread far more is, that all such promises would in the end be broken—that the hopes of liberty would be betrayed—that the moment the monarchies of England and France could obtain a peace that realised the objects for which monarchs go to war, they would feel themselves compelled by the exhaustion of their resources, by the instincts of self-conservation, to abandon the auxiliaries they had lured into revolt—restore to despotism "the right divine to govern wrong," and furnish it with new excuse for vigilance and rigour by the disorders which always distinguish armed re-

* Mr Layard.

volutions from peaceable reforms. I say nothing here against the fair possibility of reconstructing in some future congress the independence of Poland, or such territorial arrangements as are comprised in the question, "What is to be done with the Crimea, provided we take it?" But these are not all that is meant by the language we hear, less vaguely out of this House than in it, except when a Minister implies what he shrinks from explaining. And woe and shame to the English statesman who, whatever may be his sympathy for oppressed subjects, shall rouse them to rebellion against their native thrones, not foreseeing that in the changes of popular representative government all that his Cabinet may promise to-day a new Cabinet to-morrow may legally revoke; that he has no power to redeem in freedom the pledges that he writes in blood; and woe still more to brave populations that are taught to rest democracy on the arms of foreign soldiers, the fickle cheers of foreign popular assemblies, or to dream that liberty can ever be received as a gift, extorted as a right, maintained as an hereditary heirloom, except the charter be obtained at their own Runnymede, and signed under the shadow of their own oaks. But there is all the difference between rousing nations against their rulers and securing the independence and integrity of a weak nation against a powerful neighbour. The first is a policy that submits the destinies of a country to civil discord, the other relieves those destinies from foreign interference; the one tends to vain and indefinite warfare—the other starts, at the onset, with intelligible conditions of peace. Therefore, in this war, let us strictly keep to the object for which it was begun—the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, secured by all the guarantees which statesmen can devise, or victory enable us to demand. The more definite the object, the more firm you will be in asserting it. How the object is to be effected, how those securities are to be obtained, is not the affair of the House of Commons. The strategy must be planned by the allied Cabinets, and its execution intrusted to councils of war. We in this House can only judge by results; and, however unfair that may seem to Governments, it is the sole course left to us, unless we are always dictating to our allies and hampering our generals.

But, while we thus make the end of the war purely protective, we cannot make the means we adopt purely defensive. In order to force Russia into our object we must assail and cripple her wherever she can be crippled and assailed. I say, with the right hon. gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford, do not offer to her an idle insult, do not slap her in the face, but paralyse her hands. "Oh," said a noble friend of mine the other night,* "it is a wretched policy to humble the foe that you cannot crush; and are you mad enough to suppose that Russia can be crushed?" Let my noble friend, in the illustrious career which I venture to prophesy lies before him, beware how he ever endeavours to contract the grand science of statesmen into scholastic aphorisms. No, we cannot crush Russia as Russia, but we can crush her attempts to be more than Russia. We can, and we must, crush any means that enable her to storm or to steal across that tangible barrier which now divides Europe from a Power that supports the maxims of Machiavelli with the armaments of Brennus. You might as well have said to William of Orange, "You cannot crush Louis XIV.; how impolitic you are to humble him!" You might as well have said to the burghers of Switzerland, "You cannot crush Austria; don't vainly insult her by limiting her privilege to crush yourselves!" William of Orange did not crush France as a kingdom—Switzerland did not crush Austria as an empire; but William did crush the power of France to injure Holland—Switzerland did crush the power of Austria to enslave her people; and in that broad sense of the word, by the blessing of Heaven, we will crush the power of Russia to invade her neighbours and convulse the world. The right hon. gentleman the Member for Manchester has sought to frighten us by dwelling on the probable duration of this war; but if you will only be in earnest, and if you will limit yourselves strictly to its legitimate object, I have no fear that the war will be long. I do not presume on our recent successes, important though they are, for Kertch is the *entrepôt* of all the commerce of the Sea of Azoff; nor on the exaggerated estimate of the forces which Russia has in Sebastopol, or can bring to the Cri-

* Lord Stanley.

mea; nor on her difficulty through any long series of campaigns to transport and provision large armies from great distances; nor on many circumstances which, of late especially, tend to show that for exertions at once violent and sustained her sinews are not strong enough to support her bulk. But I look only to the one fact, that in these days war is money; and that no Power on earth can carry on a long war with a short purse. Russia's pecuniary resources are fast failing her. In no country is recruiting so costly, or attended with such distress to the proprietors of the soil. Every new levy, in depriving the nobles of their serfs, leaves poverty and discontent behind, while in arresting her commercial intercourse you exhaust the only springs that can recruit the capital which she robs from the land. In the great 'History of Treaties,' now publishing by the Count de Garden, and which must supersede all other authorities on that subject, he speaks thus of Russia in 1810: "The closing of her ports, which was the result of her war with England, deprived Russia of all outlet for her exportations, which, consisting chiefly of raw materials—such as timber, potash, iron, &c.—could only be transported by sea. The balance of commerce thus fixed itself entirely to the detriment of Russia, and, producing there a disastrous fall in the course of exchange, and a depreciation of the currency, menaced with ruin all the financial resources of the State." You have therefore always at work for you, not only your fleets and armies, but the vital interests of Russia herself. She cannot resist you long, provided you are thoroughly in earnest. She may boast and dissimulate to the last, but rely on it that peace will come to you suddenly—will, in her proper name, knock loudly at the door which you do not close against peace herself, but against her felonious counterfeit, who would creep through the opening disguised in her garments, and with the sword concealed under her veil. The noble lord * who has just spoken with so much honesty of conviction, ventured to anticipate the verdict of history. Let me do the same. Let me suppose that when the future philanthropist shall ask what service on the human race did we, in our generation, signally confer,—some one trained, perhaps, in

* Lord Archibald Hamilton.

the schools of Oxford, or the Institute of Manchester, shall answer—"A Power that commanded myriads—as many as those that under Xerxes exhausted rivers in their march — embodied all the forces of barbarism on the outskirts of civilisation. Left there to develop its own natural resources, no State molested, though all apprehended its growth. But, long pent by merciful nature in its own legitimate domains, this Power schemed for the outlet to its instinctive ambition; to that outlet it crept by dissimulating guile, by successive treaties that, promising peace, graduated spoliation to the opportunities of fraud. At length, under pretexts too gross to deceive the common-sense of mankind, it prepared to seize that outlet—to storm the feeble gates between itself and the world beyond." Then the historian shall say that we in our generation — the united families of England and France—made ourselves the vanguard of alarmed and shrinking Europe, and did not sheathe the sword until we had redeemed the pledge to humanity made on the faith of two Christian sovereigns, and ratified at those distant graves which liberty and justice shall revere for ever.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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